Perception, Politics and Security in South Asia

The compound crisis of 1990

P. R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Stephen Philip Cohen

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As the international community attempts to manage repeated military crises between India and Pakistan, this book examines the standoff of 1990, the first nuclear-tinged confrontation between the two regional rivals. Studying the denouement of one of the first regional crises enables a better understanding of the dynamics of India–Pakistan brinkmanship and points to ways of how long-standing disputes might be pushed towards resolution. Unlike earlier accounts of the 1990 crisis, this book argues that it was not a single event but a confluence of actions, statements, and perceptions that interacted over the brief period of four months.

Placing the crisis in the context of concurrent international events such as the fall of the Soviet Union, the authors draw out the lessons for present-day South Asian affairs. The book also makes a significant contribution to the debates on the role of nuclear weapons, confidence- and security-building strategies, and the place of ethnicity in contemporary international relations.

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P. R. Chari
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July 2002

Introduction

In early 1990, a major crisis broke out in South Asia between India and Pakistan. This crisis has – with good reason – been much studied and discussed. However, it was not a single event but a confluence of actions, statements, and perceptions that interacted over the brief period of four months – it was thus shorter than other crises that have occurred in South Asia and elsewhere (such as the events that led to the war of 1971 between the two states, or the slow-mounting crisis that led to World War I), but it lasted considerably longer than the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The crisis of early 1990 was preceded by the Brasstacks crisis of 1987, which lasted, in its critical phase, no more than a week or two. The 1990 crisis was followed in the next few years by several alarms, lasting two or three days at most, and then in 1999 by an even more serious confrontation between India and Pakistan in the Kargil region of Kashmir. In 2001–2 there was an extended crisis – some have called it brinkmanship, others have termed it "coercive diplomacy" – that brought the armed forces of India and Pakistan on a high state of alert for nearly six months.

In the minds of many outside observers, South Asia has become identified as a crisis-prone region, and since 1990 these crises have carried the threat of escalation from harsh diplomacy, to limited war, to a wider conventional war, to the possible use of nuclear weapons.

The crisis of 1990 was also significant in the sense that both participants and observers believed they were witnessing a progression of events that portended direct conflict. However, perspectives of the crisis differed significantly among observers and participants and have been judged differently with the benefit of hindsight.

Compound and complex crises

The causes of any major disaster – such as an air crash or a train wreck – are *complex*, in that they usually require a sequence of events and decisions before they occur. Often, a mechanical malfunction along with human error, plus a flaw in the "defense" mechanisms of a complex system, are all required for system failure – and disaster – to occur.

States do not precipitously decide to go to war, they are usually led down that path through a series of decisions, actions, and perceptions. Nor do they move directly to war: there is often a "crisis," a period characterized in the crisis literature as having three qualities: a threat, the prospect of war, and a sense of urgency.[1]

Crises begin with a series of events that lead policy-makers to believe that the action, or the threatened action of others, constitutes a threat to specific national interests, to their status in the international community, or to their ability to stay in power. During the 1990 crisis Indian and Pakistani decision-makers identified specific, albeit different political and strategic concerns; they also saw opportunities to advance their own and national interests. Then, policy-makers become aware that actions that might be taken to counter the threat raise the prospect of war. This was also true in 1990, more so on the Indian than the Pakistani side. Finally, policy-makers perceive themselves to be acting under time constraints, suggesting an environment of high risk and short lead time, thus making crisis decisions qualitatively different from other kinds of decisions. This seems to be the case for the 1990 crisis, again more on the Indian than the Pakistani side.

However, the 1990 crisis differed from other classic bilateral international crises in many ways. It involved parallel domestic political crises, armed and militant separatist groups, and a concerned superpower. An examination of the events of 1990 solely in terms of its international dimension is necessarily incomplete. One goal of this book is to explain how domestic and international factors intersected in a crisis that was not merely complex, but one that was a composite of several sub-crises.

Differing perceptions and judgments of the events of 1990 (beyond the fact that it was a crisis) stemmed from the unique nature and complexity of the events that occurred in early 1990.

First, the events of that year gave rise to the *first post-Cold War crisis* (predating the Gulf War by eight months). They took place against a rapidly changing international background – most notably the collapse of the Soviet Union, the unraveling of the Warsaw Pact, and the Gulf War later in the year. It was also a watershed year in terms of the relationship of South Asia with the rest of the world. Whereas others looked forward to peace, or the accrual of a peace dividend, the develop-

ments in 1990 at the global, regional, and domestic levels paradoxically *intensified* India–Pakistan rivalry.

Second, the 1990 crisis was, in the view of some at the time, the world's second *nuclear confrontation*. This aspect of the crisis has attracted the most publicity in the West, although there is reason to believe that the crisis was less "nuclear" than suggested in some important accounts. On the other hand, there are credible reports of nuclear-related threats, reported at the time, which, if true, place the 1990 crisis alongside the Cuban Missile Crisis in that special and rare category of a "near nuclear event."

Nineteen-ninety also witnessed the third major regional crisis over the contested state of Jammu and Kashmir. As we shall discuss in Chapter 3, Kashmir had lain dormant for twenty-five years. It was not the cause of the 1971 war between India and Pakistan that bisected the latter country, nor was it a major factor in the 1987 Brasstacks crisis. However, it was the cause of war between India and Pakistan and the chief theater of operations in 1948 and 1965, so a revival of the Kashmir issue could, legitimately, be regarded as a crisis in its own right.

Fourth, these events interacted with and contributed to the twin *domestic political crises* in India and Pakistan: the former deriving from the unstable politics of an unstable non-Congress government, the latter from the travails of a very weak civilian government after thirteen years of military rule. In retrospect, it is hard to pinpoint another period when such unstable political leaderships existed in both countries simultaneously, suggesting a possible relationship between political coherence and regional stability.

Finally, the 1990 crisis was situated amidst a number of other crises, none of which led to war, but several of which threatened war. It followed upon the dramatic Brasstacks crisis of 1987 (referred to by Seymour Hersh as being "even more serious than the 1990 crisis"). Brasstacks involved some of the largest military maneuvers seen since the end of World War II, and brought the two states to the edge of war. In turn, the 1990 crisis was followed by a series of smaller events or scares in 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994. And even more than ten years after the 1990 crisis, India–Pakistan relations are still characterized by considerable hostility, including mutual accusations of support for terrorist activities and sporadic shelling across the Line of Control in divided Kashmir. These resulted in armed clashes between the two countries in the Kargil sector in May–July 1999, amounting to a fourth India–Pakistan war. These crises have alternated with spells of dialog and diplomacy, notably the two India–Pakistan Summits, first in Lahore in February 1999 and then again in Agra in July 2001.

Thus the crisis of 1990 was a *composite* one. It was not merely the outgrowth of a historically persistent hostility between the two countries, it resulted from an unusual confluence of events, trends, and personalities. Not the least of these events was the Brasstacks crisis of late 1986 and early 1987, which shaped the response of all parties to 1990, even though very few of the leading personalities were directly involved in the events that had occurred some three years earlier. The complexity of the 1990 crisis, when coupled with the dramatic events that preceded it in 1987 (and the different interpretations of the events of 1990 that are recorded in this book), raise important questions about the nature of compound or composite crises, particularly the difficulty of predicting them, as well as strategies for their resolution. We will discuss some of these questions at length below and return to them in the final chapter.

After the crisis

If 1990 did not lead to war, it had other important consequences. It convinced many outside observers that South Asia was *the* area in the world where nuclear war was most likely to occur. This understanding of 1990 strongly shaped later beliefs and policies, especially in the United States. Yet, many important regional analysts did not regard the events of 1990 as being all that serious.

None of the existing studies of the 1990 crisis probe these events deeply or place them in their proper regional and international perspective. Perceptions of the crisis differ from country to country, and within countries. Thus, while a great deal has been written on the subject, especially in the United States, these writings have largely focused on the *nuclear* dimensions of this crisis[2] while its internal political and security aspects are generally referred to in passing. This American perspective was greatly influenced by beliefs within the administration that hostilities between India and Pakistan could have easily flared up – arising from the long-standing Kashmir dispute – and could have escalated into a nuclear exchange between the two countries. These beliefs were enunciated and amplified by the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, James Woolsey, in his dramatic testimony to the U.S. Senate. Woolsey stated that a nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan posed "the most probable prospect for future use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Both nations have nuclear weapons development programs and could, on short notice, assemble nuclear weapons."[3] The anxiety that the South Asian regional "hotspot" could have turned into a nuclear battlefield explains Washington's avid interest in this crisis. This view was unexamined

gospel within the first Clinton administration – a view shared by many Russian, Japanese, and European analysts.

The perception of a region on the edge of crisis informed the administration of George H. Bush when it dispatched the Gates mission to the subcontinent at the height of the 1990 crisis. American writings have placed considerable emphasis on this mission and its apparent accomplishments. The Gates mission's relevance from both the Indian and Pakistani points of view will be discussed later in this book but it might be noted here that anxieties concerning a nuclear confrontation were less evident in New Delhi and Islamabad than in Washington. Rather, the dominant perception – with one or two important exceptions – was that the two states were never, in truth, close to war, let alone a nuclear exchange. These conclusions are necessarily tentative. However, it is disconcerting that no systematic effort has been undertaken in India or Pakistan to study these events from the subcontinental point of view and thereby derive appropriate lessons to guide their fractious relationship. As we (the authors) have discovered, the major personalities involved in this crisis are still available and willing to share their recollections.[4] But although references have been made to the 1990 events by Indian and Pakistani analysts, and even in some official documents, these have not been based on conversations with policymakers on both sides of the border.

Like Brasstacks or, indeed, every other major crisis in the subcontinent over the past half-century, it is most unlikely that a full official account will be forthcoming from either India or Pakistan – and American sources, while useful, can only tell part of the story. The past history of India's and Pakistan's inability to publish any official history of their several wars, or their other conflicts, which have long been written about, confirms this observation of official reticence. Only recently have two essential accounts become available, the first being the official Indian history of the 1965 war, the second being the official Pakistani inquiry into the 1971 war.[5] Astonishingly, these saw the light of day only because they were leaked to the press by unknown sources. Purely American sources, official or unofficial, cannot suffice, because even the proximate truth of the 1990 crisis, like any other complex event, cannot be understood from one national perspective only.

An overview

This book is the first attempt at a comprehensive understanding of the 1990 crisis as it evolved, and as it was seen at the time by key decision-makers and strategic analysts within and outside the region. It is a

successor to an earlier book that examined the onset and evolution of the Brasstacks crisis of 1987.[6] Virtually the same methodology used in the Brasstacks book has been employed here. This volume is also a tentative "first complete look." In this case we have had the advantage of there being several earlier efforts to describe and explain the events of 1990, and have drawn upon them throughout. These have been supplemented by interviews with almost all available participants in the 1990 crisis. We have also been able to bring some key participants together (as in 1987) to review and critique our effort. As in the case of Brasstacks, a group of key policy-makers and informed observers met with the authors to review an earlier version of this manuscript, and their frank and forthright discussion contributed significantly to improving the final version – even where they disagreed among themselves. Our respondents must remain anonymous, and we accept the inevitable criticism that our sources are not fully cited. However, as in the Brasstacks study, we are confident of the story we tell, and have clearly designated those areas where we are less sure, or where our information is incomplete, or contradictory, or where we disagree among ourselves. In such cases, we have tried to offer alternative explanations of what happened and why.

What follows below can be seen as a series of interrogations. First, the book will examine entrenched beliefs in the Indian establishment that the 1990 crisis was vastly exaggerated by the United States; that India–Pakistan relations, although tense at this time, did not possess any nuclear dimension; and, further, that these exaggerations were motivated by an American desire to corral India and Pakistan into the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) before the Review and Extension Conference began its deliberations in 1995. It was never very clear within this logic how or why exaggerating the proportions of this crisis and imbuing it with a nuclear dimension would influence India to join the NPT, because any suspicion that the United States was pressuring India in this regard would only have stiffened domestic opposition to this treaty. The United States could not have been unaware of this situation.

Second, it will examine the dominant version of the crisis offered by various American experts, journalists, and officials, some of whom have spoken freely about these events. While the United States was extremely well informed about regional events, there were crucial developments which were beyond its capabilities (and perhaps even its imagination) to grasp. These largely pertain to discussions within the respective South Asian governments and, in some cases, between them – discussions that were not revealed to American interlocutors at that time.

Third, the dominant Pakistani interpretation – that the crisis was one involving Kashmir (more particularly, India's policies in Kashmir), and that Pakistan's incipient nuclear capabilities may have prevented an Indian attack, but also have enabled the Kashmiris to pursue their goals more successfully – needs to be scrutinized. While we have the benefit of hindsight about what happened after 1990 and what did not happen – there was no war – it cannot be said that the two countries have enjoyed normal relations since then.

The basic questions that we have set out to answer have been only partially and incompletely addressed by others. We still need to know what were the origins and true proportions of the 1990 crisis. Did it possess a nuclear dimension? What brought India and Pakistan to the brink of another conflict? How did Pakistan read Indian intentions? Were the Indians and the Pakistanis contemplating a path leading to a nuclear exchange? Did Pakistan really assemble one or more nuclear weapons? Did the existence of nuclear capability encourage the de-escalation of tensions? What precipitated American involvement? What was the role of non-regional actors, particularly the United States? How was the crisis defused? What were the motives behind the Gates mission, and what was its contribution to defusing the crisis? Finally, what were the conclusions and lessons derived from this episode by the players as well as the observers of the crisis and, again, with the benefit of hindsight, were there any significant missed opportunities before and during the crisis of 1990?

As with the Brasstacks book, this is a consensus study. Not all the authors agree with all the interpretations presented below. However, there is enough agreement about the facts and the meaning of these events that none of the authors has been moved to write a dissent or supplementary note. Indeed, we encourage further work about this crisis, and would be pleased to share our insights and data (while retaining confidentiality of our sources) with the scholarly community. Finally, as in the Brasstacks book, we have refrained from linking this study to the purely academic literature on crisis behavior, on Indian and Pakistani foreign policy, and on decision-making theory. We hope, however, that enough material has been presented to facilitate further work along these lines.

Our principal debt is to the many former (and, in some cases, serving) government officials who have shared their understanding of the events surrounding the 1990 crisis. We hope this book comes close to their (sometimes very divergent) understanding of these events. We also wish to acknowledge the important earlier studies of the crisis of 1990 that encouraged us to proceed with this book, especially Seymour Hersh's

New Yorker article and the report of the Stimson Center.[7] Finally, this study, in its first draft, originally drew heavily from a book written by Devin Hagerty.[8] However, it represents an extension of these studies and, we believe, makes an important contribution in its own right.

The book is organized as follows. In Chapters 1, 2, and 3 we discuss the international and regional background of the crisis, especially the turmoil in Kashmir that precipitated it. Chapters 4 and 5 provide a chronological overview of the crisis as it evolved in the spring of 1990, and as it was perceived by Indian and Pakistani policy-makers, the Kashmiri militants who had taken up arms against India, and the United States government. Chapter 6 examines the dominant interpretation of the crisis, which suggests that India and Pakistan nearly fought a nuclear war in 1990, and alternative perspectives, which have suggested that Islamabad and New Delhi were deterred from war by their recognition of each other's nuclear capabilities and the possibility that any military hostilities might escalate to a nuclear exchange.

To summarize our own assessment, neither India nor Pakistan *wanted* to go to war in early 1990 despite the fact that the tension level between them had risen to an alarmingly high level. The primary reason for these new, heightened tensions, of course, was the intensification of the Kashmiri–India struggle – seen in New Delhi as a Pakistan-inspired, funded, and led terrorist campaign, but viewed by Pakistan as a Kashmiri independence movement to secure the right of self-determination. But, we argue, "1990" was not solely a Kashmir crisis, nor was it solely a nuclear crisis, nor a crisis of governance and leadership. This study will attempt to disentangle these multi-layered, immediate, precipitating, and long-term "causes" that led to these events in spring 1990 and, perhaps as important, to the lessons various observers have drawn from them.

1 The strategic context

The eighteen months *preceding* the 1990 crisis were an astonishingly dramatic period in contemporary history. Immediately *following* the crisis studied here, Iraq invaded Kuwait (on August 2, 1990), and the Gulf War began four months later on January 15, 1991. Further, the Soviet Union collapsed, the Warsaw Pact unraveled and several other important events took place. For most non-specialists, the 1990 crisis appeared to be a tiny eruption during a period when more significant developments were taking place elsewhere. It was not until 1993, and the publication of Seymour Hersh's *New Yorker* article, that the larger international community came to view 1990 as a significant event. This chapter will briefly survey the global strategic milieu of 1989–90 and its direct and indirect impact on South Asia.[1]

At that time South Asia did not merit much discussion in the world's press except for the consequences of the Geneva agreement in April 1988, which paved the way for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The earlier Brasstacks crisis (1986–7) had ended peacefully, even on a note of hope – it led to Zia-ul Haq's "cricket diplomacy" trip to India in mid-1987 and regional consideration of confidence-building measures (CBMs), earlier proposed by the United States. The Indian military interventions of late 1987 and 1988 (Sri Lanka and the Maldives) were viewed by many outside the region as benign at worst, and helpful at best – it was only a year or two later that the full, tragic costs of the former intervention became apparent. There was a general assumption outside the region that South Asia would return to "business as usual." Zia's death in August 1988, and the move toward democratization in Pakistan led many observers to conclude that the region had passed through its period of greatest crisis. Except for specialists, the attention of the international community was drawn elsewhere. What were the major developments taking place outside the region, and within it?

The Soviets and the major non-regional powers

The single most important non-regional event during 1988 and 1989 was the gradual enfeeblement of the Soviet Union and the loosening of its grip within its borders and in countries that were part of its alliance system. This led to a series of strategic negotiations and military withdrawals (most notably from Afghanistan), but few at the time predicted that it would culminate in the ultimate break-up on December 25, 1991 of the Soviet Union.

At home, the Soviet Union was in increasing disarray. In mid-1988 the province of Nagorno-Karabakh voted to secede from Azerbaijan and join Armenia. Early in 1989 Moscow imposed direct rule on Nagorno-Karabakh. There were serious ethnic (anti-Russian) riots in Kazakhstan, and in February, Lithuanian independence day was publicly celebrated, followed by rallies demanding Estonian and Georgian independence. A month later the Soviet government revealed plans to give more autonomy to its republics, and by May 14, 1989, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had declared a common position on sovereignty. Four months later the Lithuanian parliament declared the 1940 Soviet annexation to be invalid. In the fall of 1989, the new Latvian Popular Front advocated independence and the Republic of Georgia voted itself the right to secede from the USSR. In late November the Soviet Parliament granted economic autonomy to the three Baltic republics and ended its direct rule over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Just across the Soviet frontier, the Warsaw Treaty Organization members were moving quickly to overthrow their communist governments and leave the Soviet orbit. They were encouraged to do so by Mikhail Gorbachev's statement of December 7, 1988 (two months after becoming president), that Soviet troops would withdraw from Europe. Throughout 1989 Soviet forces were withdrawn from or reduced significantly in Mongolia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and elsewhere.

Solidarity's much-publicized strike over recognition took place in August 1988, and by March 1989, the Polish government and Solidarity came to an agreement on political reforms. Hungary began to open its borders with Austria in May, and in November 1989, the Warsaw Pact foreign ministers' meeting formally abandoned the Brezhnev doctrine – which provided legal justification for Soviet intervention in WTO countries. The pace of change accelerated, as pro-democracy marches took place in Czechoslovakia, the hard-line Eric Honecker was replaced in East Germany, and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall started on November 10. German unification plans were announced (leading to

final reunification in October 1990) and the democratic philosopher–activist, Vaclav Havel, was elected Czech president at the end of 1989. The pace of change did not ease during the first few months of 1990, when the 1990 India–Pakistan crisis took place. It was during this period that Gorbachev promised to amend the Soviet Constitution to allow Soviet republics to secede (a particularly startling announcement for Indians and Pakistanis, worried about their own separatist movements), and the Soviets also agreed to withdraw their forces completely from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. By the end of 1990 it seemed that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was unlikely to remain either socialist or a union.

No one who lived through these events could escape a feeling of profound change – barriers and ideologies that had stood fast for fifty years were being peacefully and speedily torn down. These events were covered extensively in the South Asian press, on international radio, and even on local government-controlled television services. But in terms of an impact on South Asia, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was to have the most direct consequences.

The Soviet Union agreed to the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan following the Geneva agreement concluded on April 14, 1988. Withdrawal began a month later and was completed on 15 February 1989 when the last Soviet general in Afghanistan walked across the Amu Darya. While it was widely assumed in the United States (and Pakistan) that the Mujahidin would sweep across Afghanistan, toppling the Najibullah government, this did not happen. The Afghan Mujahidin attacked Jalalabad and other major cities in March 1989, but the Najib government reversed these gains and the war dragged on.

The Soviet Union was re-evaluating its position in the wider South Asian region as well, particularly its previous ties with New Delhi. In a series of visits and speeches, the Soviet leadership made it clear that its relationship with India would be reviewed. We shall discuss this in the context of India's response to the changing international environment.

Likewise the Soviet Union also seemed to be taking a new look at its relations with Pakistan. Appreciative of Pakistan's positive contribution to the conclusion of the Geneva Accords, which provided a face-saving framework for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Moscow sought Pakistan's help in ensuring their smooth implementation and securing the release of Soviet POWs from the Afghan Mujahidin alliance. It also sought Pakistan's cooperation for an orderly transition in the Muslim republics of Central Asia.

China

Beijing's "emergence" as a global power coincided with the decline and disintegration of the Soviet Union. Beijing's economic power was not very visible in 1988–90 (these were the years when Americans and others were more worried about the emergence of the Japanese "economic superstate"). Furthermore, China was entering a period of domestic turmoil, which was to make it something of a pariah in the West and the human rights community. In 1988 mass uprisings took place in Tibet. They continued until March 1989, when martial law was imposed in Lhasa and the rest of the Tibetan province. Then, in May, Tiananmen Square was occupied by students and joined by Chinese workers in pro-democracy demonstrations which spread to other major cities. Their occupation continued throughout the month until, on June 4, hundreds of Chinese students and workers were killed when the PLA forcibly cleared Tiananmen Square. Most of these events were commented on exhaustively by the international media, who were in Beijing to cover Gorbachev's summit meeting with the Chinese leadership.

In foreign affairs, the Chinese had initiated a systematic attempt to normalize relations with their chief antagonists, and prepare the ground for an altered relationship with the "sole superpower." One of the first visitors to discuss normalization of relations with China was Rajiv Gandhi. On December 19, 1988, he made the first visit by an Indian premier to China in thirty-four years. There was an armed confrontation two years before, when Indian and Chinese border troops faced each other, eyeball-to-eyeball at Sumdorong Chu in Arunachal Pradesh. The two countries established a joint working group to resolve their border dispute. Subsequently, Beijing hosted a summit meeting with Gorbachev, whose earlier Vladivostok speech (of July 28, 1986) announced a new, conciliatory, Soviet policy toward China.

Beijing had thus begun to normalize its relations with the Soviet Union and India. This had implications for Pakistan whose role in weakening the declining Soviet Union by assisting the Afghan resistance now was sharply reduced. For China, the Pakistan relationship was important largely in terms of balancing India, but even here Beijing and New Delhi were moving toward a dialog on their outstanding border disputes. Further, there were reports of Chinese concern about the spread of Islamic fundamentalism into its own Muslim minority provinces.

The United States

The United States elected a new president in 1989. George H. Bush, assumed office on January 20, 1989, and James Baker became his

secretary of state. Although there were holdovers from Reagan's eight years' presidency, a major re-evaluation of policy options was initiated after Bush took office. The new administration was less than fully persuaded by Mikhail Gorbachev's motives and direction, and there were still some doubts about the meaning of the Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan, the Soviet commitment to arms control, and the implications of these events for American strategy.

While Washington was suffused with a sense of exhilaration over the end of the Cold War, Bush declared on May 12 in a speech at Texas A&M University that the Cold War had ended in a decisive American victory. However, despite its resulting pre-eminence in the international system, Americans were perplexed at finding themselves at the end of a long road without any indication of how to proceed. This feeling of uncertain victory was encapsulated by two very different books, published about the same time. Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" published in the summer of 1989, argued that liberal democracy, of which the United States was the strongest and most important representative, had not only triumphed throughout the world over rival ideologies, but also constituted the "end point" of mankind's ideological evolution and "the final form of human government."[2] The global diffusion of liberty and democracy would be uneven and fitful, but in the future there was no foreseeable challenge to this ideology.

Fukuyama's optimism was ridiculed by the pessimists, who saw environmental degradation, ethnic conflict, economic disarray, and the rise of rogue and unprincipled states as new factors that could seriously endanger the United States (the latter through terrorism and nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons). They also lamented the growing incapacity of the United States to develop the resources and the coherent policies to meet such threats, let alone old ones. The historian, Paul Kennedy, not the most pessimistic member of this group, offered a widely shared vision of the future: an America in slow decline in relative living standards, educational levels, technical skills, social provisions, industrial leadership, and ultimately, national power, "just as in Britain."[3]

As for strategic concerns, these were entirely focused on managing the relationship with a Soviet Union in decline. In the case of the Soviets, the U.S. administration was generally one step behind – the first Bush–Gorbachev summit was not held until December 1989 off Malta – and many of the Bush policy-makers viewed with skepticism the rapidity with which their Reaganite predecessors had accommodated Mikhail Gorbachev. Obsessed by the Soviet relationship, and the epochal changes occurring in East Europe (and with the Middle East peace process in progress), little interest was bestowed on South Asia, or even

to the Iran–Iraq conflict, with its uneasy ceasefire. Both the Gulf and South Asia seemed secure and stable; there was hardly any need, time, or urgent requirement to look at either region closely until the India–Pakistan crisis of early 1990 and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

The subcontinental powers: India

Many Indians could not bring themselves to believe that the long post-war era of a bipolar world, which had made "non-alignment" viable, and which, indeed, allowed Indian foreign policy to be placed on auto-pilot, had come to an end. As the Soviet Union dissolved, New Delhi was rapidly losing its chief strategic ally, although the full extent of the decline of the Soviet Union was not yet apparent. Its two neighbor-rivals, Pakistan and China, however, were in rough alignment with the other superpower.

Gorbachev's glasnost (opening) and perestroika (transparency) signified a radical departure from the comfortable years of Brezhnev. The latter's project of trying to draw India into a pan-Asian alliance (in part directed against China), had triggered off a minor foreign policy alarm in New Delhi, and the slight warming of the relationship with the United States that had been initiated in the early 1980s.[4] Glasnost was a complete reversal of direction for the Soviets. Gorbachev applied it to Asia in a speech given on July 28, 1986 in Vladivostok. This produced considerable anxiety in Delhi.[5] Gorbachev announced his intention to withdraw some units from Afghanistan; he recognized America's legitimate presence in the Asia–Pacific region, Japan's great economic strength, the validity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and noted a desire to work more closely with China. It was part of what one observer called an overall strategy of "muscular retrenchment – one which vigorously asserts Soviet interests while groping for a new power balance to minimize the costs of defending them."[6] Gorbachev referred to India in these terms:

> The acknowledged leader of [the non-aligned] movement is great India, with its moral authority and traditional wisdom, with its own particular political experience and huge economic potential. We esteem highly the contribution it has already made to the cause of asserting the norms of equal coexistence and justice in the international community. The friendly relations between the USSR and India have become a stabilizing principle on an international scale.[7]

It was hard to interpret such change as being in India's interest. A former Indian ambassador to Moscow, Inder K. Gujral, soon to become foreign minister, tried to put the best face on the radical changes in the international order, and especially on the decline of Soviet power and interest in South Asia. On the eve of his becoming foreign minister, Gujral wrote that:

> Of late there have been some misgivings about the future of our relations with the USSR. These myopic views show that we are afraid of a tension-free world. The collapse of bipolarity and an end to the Cold War terrifies the pundits of doom and status quo. Some of them fear that a "superpower condominium" may bully us, while others feel that the Soviet interests may marginalize us in their view. Such perceptions understate our own power and the strategic position we occupy. The Soviets will continue to need us as much as we need their friendship and support. . . . Moscow has not slackened its sales to our defense sector. We have been able to neutralize Pakistani acquisitions of sophisticated armaments because of open-handed support from the Kremlin.[8]

Summing up, Gujral offered the outline of a new Indian foreign policy:

> Perestroika and the new Soviet foreign policy . . . offers us the prospect of dealing with both East and West without affecting our close and purposeful relations with the USSR. The strategy and nuances of these dealings have to be worked out carefully with one point in mind: our policy must, under no circumstances, smack of opportunism or dilute our time-tested friendship with the USSR.[9]

It was the Soviet veto that had insulated India from international censure on the Kashmir issue. The Indo-Soviet Treaty provided India with a strategic counterbalance against the developing Pak-Sino-American axis, and permitted India to excise Bangladesh from Pakistan. The loss to India of its core relationship with the Soviet Union and its chief source of arms was all the more devastating because it was wholly unexpected.

For its part, India had accommodated Soviet sensitivities by not making critical references to what India termed the Soviet "entry" into Afghanistan. In fact, India pleaded in international forums for an understanding of the compulsions that led the Soviets into that country.

As Moscow's attention turned inward and its rivalry with Washington evolved into a tentative partnership, India lost its value as a bulwark of

pro-Moscow sentiment in the Third World. When Gorbachev's initial reforms plunged the Soviet economy into depression, Moscow was forced to re-think the generous terms under which it had structured its economic and military ties with its Third World allies. Indian trade with the Soviet Union – previously conducted in rupees, which conserved New Delhi's precious hard currency – was placed on a more conventional commercial footing. The terms of Soviet military sales to India also became less attractive.

Further, Indian power was in visible retreat by late 1989 after years of military growth and expanding regional influence. Its largest-ever military exercise, Brasstacks, had only revealed how a militarily dominant India could be checkmated by a smaller Pakistan; the Sri Lanka incursion by the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) was a continuing disaster. The Indian army had fared badly against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), losing over 1,200 troops. Finally, after negotiations between the Tigers and the Sri Lankan government, elections were announced, one condition being that the Indian forces would be asked to withdraw. The election of Sri Lankan President Ranasinge Premadasa in early 1989 led to an unseemly wrangle between him and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on this issue, but ultimately India had to pull out its peacekeeping forces. The expansion of the Indian navy at this time alarmed more than impressed India's otherwise friendly neighbors in Southeast Asia. The confrontation with China in Sumdorong Chu demonstrated that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was willing to support New Delhi – but it did lead thereafter to the reopening of negotiations with Beijing.

Pakistan's unsure status

Islamabad had the most to lose by international change: its close relationship with China, the United States, and the supportive Muslim states were all up for recalculation after the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan. However, some Pakistani strategists had turned their gaze upon Central Asia – making the assumption that pro-Pakistani Mujahidin forces would soon come to power in Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan had drawn arms and narcotics into Pakistani politics. This, coupled with a decade of military rule, had badly eroded Pakistani civil society. After President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq's death in an air crash on August 17, 1988, its politics were thrown into a tumultuous state. The transition to democracy was not smooth, even though the elections held in November produced a weak minority government headed by Benazir Bhutto. Pakistan was also able to regain admission

into the Commonwealth a year after her election – her father had pulled Pakistan out of the organization seventeen years earlier.

Pakistan was, however, becoming strategically marginalized. Islamabad's value to the United States and China was in decline, as it was no longer needed to funnel arms and financial support to the militants battling Soviet forces in Afghanistan. The Soviet defeat in Afghanistan had reduced the value of the U.S.–Pakistani strategic partnership. Among the emerging differences between the United States and Pakistan was the possibility of Islamabad extending its power from Afghanistan into the Muslim Central Asian Republics. This policy had been pursued by some of Zia's successors, especially those in Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – a policy only reversed twelve years later in 2001. With Afghanistan as a base, they argued that they could actually bring down the Soviet Union, and sought American support for the effort. Zia's death weakened American influence over Pakistani policy, and there were sharp exchanges between Americans and Pakistanis over these plans for Central Asia.[10]

There was also growing friction over Pakistan's covert nuclear weapons program. Proliferation had begun to displace the Afghan war effort as the prime component of America's South Asia policy.[11] There had always been sharp differences between the two states as to the acceptable limits of this program. The emerging American concern over the Pakistani nuclear program anticipated a much larger "nuclear" crisis later in the year: the discovery of the full extent of the Iraqi and North Korean nuclear programs. This was to further toughen American policy toward Pakistan's own program.

Thus, as the new decade of the 1990s began, both New Delhi and Islamabad were losing their chief strategic allies.[12] These harsh realities required a readjustment in their foreign policies, a readjustment that was both hastened and complicated by the 1990 crisis.

A world in tumult

Other major events occurring in the world need to be noted: all of them featured prominently in the South Asian media, but some of them, especially in the Middle East, seemed to hold great relevance for the increasingly disturbed situation in Kashmir.

Indians and Pakistanis, and especially Kashmiris, were closely following developments in the Middle East. There was great regional sympathy for the Palestinian movement, which had taken a new turn with the Intifada that began in December 1987. Almost a year later the process accelerated when Yasser Arafat recognized the state of Israel and

denounced terrorism (December 1988). By mid-1989 Israel had released hundreds of detained Palestinians, and in October 1989, American proposals for a regional peace plan were being negotiated between Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians, who by the end of the year were demanding direct talks with Israel's neighbors. The Intifada seemed to have made the difference, and leaders in both India and Pakistan publicly and profusely praised the Palestinian struggle.

The period 1988–9 also saw other major developments of relevance to South Asia. There were demonstrations in the Yugoslav provinces of Kosovo and Vijvodina against curbs on their autonomy, and the beginnings of an unraveling of the Yugoslav federation when (in fall 1989) Slovenia voted to secede from Yugoslavia. In Western Sahara, Polisario was still active, and in the Horn of Africa, the Ethiopian government offered unconditional peace talks to the Eritrean and Tigre rebels. In Southeast Asia, Vietnam withdrew its troops from Cambodia (April 1989), and major racial reform plans were announced in South Africa, followed by negotiations between the new, liberal president of South Africa, F. W. de Klerk, and the still-imprisoned Nelson Mandela.

Proliferation: once again, a cause

With the demise of the Soviet Union and a decline in the need for nuclear deterrence between the major global powers, the nuclear debate moved on to a new phase of concern over nuclear proliferation. Global arms control negotiations seemed to be progressing well. In the fall of 1989 a series of arms control talks (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe [CSCE], Chemical Weapons Convention, and Intermediate Nuclear Forces [INF]) progressed rapidly. Further, there was dramatic progress in South Africa and Latin America, as a number of states either admitted their capacity to produce nuclear weapons, or declared that they would renounce nuclear weapons forever (South Africa did both, and also joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT]). Developments in the region seemed to be moving toward détente as Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto reached an agreement in 1988 not to attack each other's nuclear facilities and installations.

For a variety of reasons, the United States and other countries became increasingly sensitive to proliferation issues. There were revelations about the manufacture of nuclear weapons by South Africa, greater knowledge of the Iraqi program(s), and considerable bureaucratic pressure to reveal what was known about Pakistan. Further, the global engagement with negotiations over the extension of the NPT further sensitized Americans to the threat of nuclear proliferation.

Non-proliferation concerns, long-submerged, were thus beginning to surface again, particularly in South Asia. During the Reagan and much of the Bush administration, the hawks on Afghanistan had dominated the defense and foreign policy establishments, preventing any significant effort to contain the Pakistani nuclear program. But at the end of the Afghan War, congressional concerns over nuclear proliferation grew as the Soviet threat receded. While a Pakistani military nuclear program was known to exist in the 1980s, neither America nor India, nor, least of all, China believed then that it was a danger to international stability. American officials were aware – or at least had their own understanding – of how far Pakistan had proceeded in crossing various "red lines" established from 1984 onward. But they were not unduly concerned that Pakistan would deploy and use its nuclear weapons to precipitate a regional crisis.

The U.S.–Pakistan differences were expressed in their dissimilar understandings of the implications of the Pressler Amendment. This provided for the cut-off of military and other assistance to Pakistan if the U.S. President was unable to certify that Pakistan was not in possession of a nuclear device *and* that American assistance to Pakistan made the acquisition of a Pakistani weapon less likely. Pakistanis took the amendment to be a statement of American tolerance of at least a minimal Pakistani program, admitting of some flexibility in interpretation. The United States came to view it as requiring an automatic cut-off of assistance should the U.S. President determine that Pakistan was violating the agreement. Pakistan's nuclear program was among the most "visible" to post-Cold War non-proliferation warriors, since there still was incomplete knowledge about the Iraqi, North Korean, and Iranian nuclear programs. With the retreat of the Soviets from Afghanistan, it was politically the most vulnerable. Ironically, by late 1989, it was also thought to be susceptible to American pressure, with its new civilian government being headed by the seemingly pro-American Benazir Bhutto. At the onset of the 1990 crisis, the intersection of the Pakistani nuclear program with a regional crisis heightened U.S. concern, especially because non-proliferation seemed, at long last, to be succeeding elsewhere. South Africa had begun dismantling its nuclear program in 1989. Two other countries on the verge of acquiring a nuclear capability, Brazil and Argentina, were moving toward a non-proliferation agreement; they finally signed it in November 1990.

India's nuclear program was not subjected to the same kinds of American diplomatic and political pressures as Pakistan's. India was not a recipient of U.S. military assistance, nor was it a major purchaser of American equipment. The laws that permitted a presidential waiver

for Islamabad were not applicable to it, although India remained under the technology transfer restrictions imposed after its 1974 nuclear test, mandated by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act (1978).

Global events and the 1990 crisis

While the major precipitating cause of the 1990 crisis was the growing turmoil in Kashmir, the global strategic context influenced the way in which the crisis unfolded and shaped the way in which both South Asian and non-regional policy-makers behaved during and after the crisis. In summary, this regional–strategic linkage was important in four ways:

- The winding down of the Cold War threw into disarray the strategic calculations made by India and Pakistan that depended upon the support, or interest, of the two major global powers.
- Because of this and other dramatic events that occurred during the 1988–90 period, policy-makers in Washington, Moscow, and other major capitals were distracted; they paid even less attention to South Asia than usual. Their *strategic* disinterest in the region was compounded by the way in which a relatively amicable Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan was accomplished.
- This period also coincided with a growing American concern over the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as further details were discovered about the Pakistani and Indian programs and the efforts made by Iraq, North Korea, and other states to acquire missile and nuclear technology and other weapons of mass destruction.
- Finally, international events had an impact on the simmering Kashmir dispute. Kashmiris watched the progress of the Palestinian Intifada on Indian and Pakistani television; they saw the Berlin Wall being torn down, and the celebration of Polish and then other East European independence movements. Above all, they saw the defeat of a major superpower in Afghanistan: a country brought down by a combination of international support and popular resistance. We will describe the evolution of the Kashmir crisis in greater detail in Chapter 3, but it is evident that these dramatic international events – some of them in close geopolitical proximity to Kashmir itself – were being closely watched in the Valley.

2 A region in turmoil on the eve of crisis

In early 1990, both India and Pakistan had weak minority governments and their strategic relationship had begun to deteriorate. During 1986–7 there was a major regional military crisis (Brasstacks), but it was characterized by strong, if sometimes overambitious, leadership on both sides: Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan and Rajiv Gandhi in India. Zia died in an unexplained plane crash on August 17, 1988, along with several key generals and the U.S. ambassador, Arnold Raphel. This event sent Pakistan into uncharted political waters. Then, in late November 1989, India's Congress Party lost a national election, and V. P. Singh replaced Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister. There was growing uncertainty and confusion in both states regarding the personalities and intentions of the "other." This chapter surveys both the regional political and strategic developments, reserving for Chapter 3 a discussion of those elements of the 1990 crisis that emerged from events taking place in Kashmir itself.

Democratic instability: "no good deed goes unpunished"

The period from mid-1988 to the beginning of 1990 was a turning point in South Asia's relationship with the outside world. These years were also a period during which domestic political events in India and Pakistan accelerated in pace and intensity. Zia died, but an election scheduled by Zia went ahead as planned; an Indian coalition government collapsed; and everywhere politicians fought savagely to hold on to power. Hitherto politically stable, India and Pakistan were transformed into uncertain political entities. In this context the bureaucracies – always significant in India and Pakistan – began to assume greater powers. Both countries were also about to plunge into severe economic crises brought on by their extravagant military spending in the 1980s and their mismanagement of economic policy. All these essentially

domestic developments were to contribute significantly to the composite crisis of early 1990.

The domestic political crises were wholly unexpected. On the surface, the election of Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto on November 17, 1988, and V. P. Singh on December 2, 1989, were reassuring developments. They were believed to mark Pakistan's completion of the transition from military to civilian rule and the successful transfer of power from the long-dominant Congress Party to a multi-party opposition coalition. However, neither Benazir's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) nor V. P. Singh's National Front (NF) had won decisively, as both failed to obtain a majority of votes. Rather than ushering in stable governments, the elections, paradoxically enough, resulted in political insecurity. Neither Benazir nor V. P. Singh could obtain a clear "mandate" from the people, and in both countries there were powerful groups waiting on the sidelines ready to topple the government – the military and the defeated Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan, and the just-ousted but long-in-office Congress Party in India.

The elections and the change in political leaders brought to power many new personalities. There were new ministers, army commanders, and senior civilian bureaucrats in both countries, as well as an entirely new cast of politicians. This contributed to new perspectives being voiced in India and Pakistan regarding the lessons of recent conflicts, the nature of their security situation, the interests of their own country, and the steps, unilateral and bilateral, that were needed to advance these interests. We will briefly survey the state of informed opinion on each of these questions in India and Pakistan before turning to contemporary regional security developments.

India

Before the 1990 crisis erupted, India had undergone a number of traumatic experiences, including the 1987 Brasstacks crisis and the abortive military operation in Sri Lanka. During the Brasstacks crisis few Indian policy-makers took Pakistan's nuclear credentials seriously. It was seen as a historical curiosity, not a real crisis, and was, by 1989, overshadowed by the disastrous intervention in Sri Lanka which cost some 1,200 Indian lives, ending in a humiliating withdrawal of Indian forces.

At home, the 1989 elections were a turning point. They were the first in a series of national elections (others were subsequently held in 1991, 1996, 1998, and 1999), which resulted in the installation of minority or coalition governments. In 1988 seven opposition parties worked out

a common strategy. These included a number of centrist parties, including the Janata Party, two Lok Dal factions, and V. P. Singh's Jan Morcha that formed the Janata Dal. They were joined by several powerful regional parties and formed the National Front, but this coalition did not command a majority of parliamentary seats. With outside support from the quite dissimilar conservative Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Left Front, the National Front could barely govern. Dissensions within the Janata Dal (Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal was openly antagonistic to Prime Minister V. P. Singh) and the withdrawal of the BJP's support over the Ayodhya issue viz. the BJP's campaign to replace a five-hundred year old mosque with a Hindu temple at Ayodhya, led to the government losing its majority. The government was replaced, very briefly, by one headed by Chandra Shekhar who, in turn, had to resign in March 1991 when new elections were called.

The future appears to portend much the same, suggesting that this period was a learning experience for India in terms of dealing with a new international system, and the governmental arrangements which had been so stable and consistent in previous decades had disappeared. Coalition governments focus on domestic politics, but are deeply vulnerable to foreign policy issues for two reasons. One is that the earlier national consensus on foreign policy had broken down in India; the other is that foreign policy issues can also provide the pretext to bring down a government. Until the BJP-led coalition of 1998, none of the coalition governments that governed India in the preceding ten years made more than incremental changes in foreign policy, adjusting it minimally only where unavoidably necessary.

This could be because the power of the central bureaucracy was, paradoxically, enhanced during this period. Very few of the Indian political parties have much in the way of foreign policy expertise (compared, say, with the Swatantra Party of the 1960s, or the Socialists of that era, or Congress under Nehru). By default, those who control the files control the policy; while the Indian foreign policy bureaucracies are no more experimental or daring than their counterparts elsewhere, they do provide a degree of continuity to Indian foreign and security policy. V. P. Singh's National Front government governed without a majority of parliamentary seats thanks to the support "from the outside" of the BJP and the leftist parties. It managed to come to power in large part because of the Bofors scandal.[1] From that time onwards Rajiv was on the defensive, both internally and abroad, as he fought a rearguard action to prevent further disclosure about the Bofors deal.

Prime Minister V. P. Singh had earlier occupied a number of senior government posts – first as Rajiv Gandhi's finance minister, then as

defense minister, where he became aware of the Bofors scandal, and also helped defuse the Brasstacks crisis. His triumph over Rajiv Gandhi marked the second time in the history of independent India when the dominant Congress Party had been removed from office.[2] The smooth transfer of power in New Delhi was widely interpreted as signaling the robustness of Indian democracy. V. P. Singh had a foreign minister, Inder K. Gujral, who undoubtedly had a major influence on shaping foreign policy, even though Gujral shared V. P. Singh's primarily inward, domestic-looking orientation. However, he also had a deputy prime minister, Devi Lal, another senior Janata leader, who had prime ministerial ambitions himself.

There were thus three major groups contributing to decision-making at this time: the National Front government, the Congress opposition, and the permanent bureaucracy, especially in the foreign ministry. The BJP, while vocal and articulate on a number of issues, had only eighty-six parliamentary seats and at this stage little influence over foreign or security policy.

Strategically, India was undergoing a period of consolidation and reappraisal: Indian forces were coming back from the disastrous expedition to Sri Lanka.[3] The much publicized Indo-Sri Lankan agreement of July 29, 1987, which had led to Indian military involvement in Sri Lanka, began to unravel after the mass suicide of a group of Tiger cadres held by the Sri Lankan navy in October 1987. The IPKF dispatched to Sri Lanka metamorphosed into a "peace maintenance" and then a "peace enforcement" force. It was eventually withdrawn under humiliating circumstances in March 1990. The crisis in the Punjab was still acute, and the economy was on the edge of a catastrophe with foreign exchange reserves having dwindled to barely two weeks' requirements. Relations with the Soviet Union were good (Gujral had served as India's ambassador to Moscow fifteen years earlier) although there was deep concern about Gorbachev's new policies and unpredictability.

The National Front, especially its Janata core, believed that India had badly overextended itself during the Rajiv Gandhi years and that mistakes had been committed by Congress in their policy toward Punjab and Kashmir. This was a time for consolidation and domestic healing, not for foreign adventures or brinkmanship. In their view, India's most pressing threats came from within, not from abroad, although they continued to condemn Pakistani support for Khalistani separatists, and terrorist elements in Kashmir. The policy implications of this worldview were that the central government needed to pursue a conciliatory policy toward dissidents and separatists, and reach an accommodation with these groups. V. P. Singh went to Amritsar in an open jeep wearing

a turban to woo the estranged Sikh community. There he criticized Rajiv Gandhi for having backed out of an accord reached in 1985 with the Sikh leadership. Led by Gujral, the Janata–NF leadership embarked upon a reappraisal of India's foreign and security policy.

The National Front government was vehemently criticized on almost all its policies by the opposition Congress Party led by Rajiv Gandhi as well as the BJP, even though the latter had pledged to support to the government. The BJP's leading parliamentary spokesman was Atal Behari Vajpayee, who served as foreign minister in the late 1970s in an earlier coalition government. (Vajpayee subsequently served twice as India's prime minister.) Congress was still the largest party in parliament, but had not been able to form a government. Both Congress and BJP spokesmen argued in parliament and the press that India had become a power in decline, that the Janata elements in the government had allowed foreign agents and powers to meddle in the country's internal affairs, especially in Kashmir and Punjab. They demanded that India needed to assert its regional dominance again. While still reeling from the Bofors scandal, Rajiv was still assertive in foreign policy matters, arguing (as did the BJP) that a strong India (that is, India led by itself) would deter others from undercutting India in its own region.

The permanent bureaucracy was closer to this perspective than to that of the new government. S. K. Singh, the new foreign secretary, held hawkish views regarding Pakistan, where he had recently served as India's high commissioner. For Singh, and the Indian high commissioner in Islamabad, J. N. Dixit, a unilateral, conciliatory policy toward a Pakistan where the hardliners and the military still held sway was a naive policy. Dixit, who later became foreign secretary under P. V. Narasimha Rao, has written extensively about this period, to justify his own views and that of the government. Dixit blamed both Benazir Bhutto and the UF government for the subsequent crisis. Benazir, he wrote, had "simplistic expectations" about the very complex Indo-Pakistan relationship.[4] In contrast, Rajiv Gandhi's approach, according to Dixit, was cautious but pragmatic: Rajiv's goal was to engineer "positive and substantive cooperation," which would create the necessary atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence that could ultimately lead to practical solutions to intractable problems. Gandhi, Dixit claims, was willing to sign a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation, and to meet Pakistani concerns. In addition, Rajiv's suggestion about not attacking each other's nuclear facilities was transformed into a bilateral agreement.

Dixit saw Rajiv Gandhi as a statesman, willing to pursue confidence-building and risk-reducing methods, an approach "tempered by realism." But because of Benazir's inexperience, and the anti-Indian power blocs

in Pakistan, "Mutual disappointment between Benazir and Rajiv was therefore inevitable." At best, if Rajiv had continued in power, and if Benazir had not faced domestic problems, "they could perhaps have made small beginnings in resolving the contradictions over policy differences such as Kashmir, Siachen, non-proliferation and arms control, and structuring the military balances on the subcontinent."[5]

As poorly as he regarded Benazir, Dixit and a number of other senior Foreign Service officers had little more respect for Gujral, whom they regarded as naive. In the words of Dixit, who met Gujral for a personal briefing shortly after the new government took office:

> Gujral told me during the personal briefing sessions that the Janata government wants to qualitatively change the orientation of Indian foreign policy, particularly toward its neighbors. He said that the Rajiv Gandhi era was characterized by tensions and conflict with neighbors and that all this had to be changed by a concerted effort and a positive attitude. I told him that the norm for good relations with our neighbors was unexceptional, but fulfilling that norm could never be a one-sided or unilateral process. Our policies have to be geared to the attitudes of our neighbors toward us and we should have appropriate responses in our foreign policy or appropriate pre-emptive elements in our policies to meet negative attitudes or contingencies.[6]

Although Dixit heard rumors that he was going to be removed shortly after he went to Islamabad as high commissioner, he sardonically notes that ". . . the situation in Kashmir blew up in January 1990, and Pakistan became vocally anti-Indian, both in word and action. It was perhaps in the context of this development that the government of India may have decided to let me stay on in Pakistan in the conviction that if Pakistan is nasty then it is appropriate that a nasty fellow like Dixit should remain in Islamabad."[7]

No less disturbing to the bureaucracy, which had grown accustomed to dealing closely with the Soviets, was the anxiety that this ally was drifting away. However, the bureaucracy, both civilian and military, had grown wary of an activist policy. India's Brasstacks exercise, the earlier tension along the China border, and the calamitous peacekeeping mission to Sri Lanka (in many ways, the Indian army's Vietnam), with which Dixit had been closely associated (as he had been India's high commissioner to Colombo during this period), had especially angered the senior ranks of the officer corps. Many of them resented General K. Sundarji for involving the army in these enterprises only slightly less

than they resented the civilian leadership that approved them. After Brasstacks, the Indian army suffered a severe budget crunch, made worse by the wear and tear on armor and transport equipment due to the Exercise. The Indian army was also becoming increasingly concerned that domestic disarray could affect the defense of India's borders.

Whether civilian or military official, politician or bureaucrat, there was widespread distrust of the United States in New Delhi. America had armed Pakistan for almost ten years, it had tolerated Islamabad's covert nuclear weapons program, and Washington was still very close to China. There were few "pro-American" voices in India during those years. Instead, an ingrained belief obtained that the United States was trying to undercut India by supporting its two chief antagonists, Pakistan and China. This was the policy framework for many Indian officials, who still regarded the Soviet Union as an important strategic ally. It was to shape their response to Washington's attempt at conflict resolution throughout the early 1990s.

Pakistan

Informed military and strategic opinion in Pakistan concluded that it was in an excellent strategic position vis-à-vis India, and could take advantage of the opportunity presented by the Kashmir uprising. It held this view even though Pakistan's own domestic political situation was in turmoil.

Many strategists concluded that Islamabad had "won" the 1987 Brasstacks crisis. Its bold countermove in the direction of the Indian Punjab deterred New Delhi from attacking across the Rajasthan border. Additionally, some Pakistanis believed that the near-possession of a Pakistani nuclear program may have contributed to what they saw as an Indian retreat in that crisis. This attitude was most fully expressed on several occasions by Zia's successor, General Mirza Aslam Beg. After Zia's death on August 17, 1988, Beg concurred in the restoration of at least a limited democracy through the electoral process. There is some evidence that at the time Beg wanted to become president himself, but that he was talked out of this Ziaist arrangement by the other service chiefs and senior army commanders, many of whom concluded that Pakistan had had enough of military rule. Pakistan then acquired the first of many "troikas" – governments in which power was uneasily shared between the president and the prime minister, but with the army chief as the ultimate political power, the final arbiter. Subsequently, various army chiefs exercised that power more or less vigorously and more or less openly – Beg most vigorously and most openly.

Benazir Bhutto was elected as prime minister on November 17, 1988, with a plurality of votes. The daughter of the charismatic and populist Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who had been tried and executed during the martial law regime in 1979, she was suspicious of both the military and the "Ziaists" – former associates of President Zia, including Ghulam Ishaq Khan. He was one of Zia's closest civilian advisors, and was elevated from the chairmanship of Pakistan's Senate to become acting president on August 18, 1988, in accordance with the relevant constitutional provisions.

Her chief electoral opponent, Mian Nawaz Sharif, was also a protégé of Zia, having served as the finance minister and then chief minister of Punjab during Zia's rule. Sharif assembled a center-right coalition that relied heavily upon Islamic conservatives and former Zia officials. It also had the support of many in the military, who were suspicious (and in some cases, fearful) of another Bhutto coming to power. When the Kashmir crisis erupted, this appeared to be an issue tailor-made for Nawaz, who was to use it to further strengthen his ties with the armed forces and the conservative elements in Pakistan.

Yet, in 1988 these developments were still in the future. Many then saw Benazir Bhutto's assumption of the prime ministership as a major step towards the restoration of democracy. Below the surface, Pakistan's domestic political scene was quite volatile. The post-1988 troika had no rules and no clear-cut definition of roles and responsibilities. Each party was jealously guarding its power, and was fearful of encroachment by the other. Benazir was especially vulnerable, and was also the most inexperienced of the three, and even her popular political base was not decisive. She had only won 92 out of 215 contested seats in the National Assembly, and had incurred the enmity of Nawaz Sharif who had won a plurality of seats in Punjab, Pakistan's dominant province.[8]

Yet, each member of the troika believed that they were acting on behalf of a Pakistani national interest, that they represented "the people" (or at least the state) of Pakistan. The military in particular viewed itself as the last bastion of stability and security. While President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), Aslam Beg, were content to let the popular and populist Benazir Bhutto represent Pakistan to the world, she chafed under their continuous dominance over vital national security issues, such as the nuclear program and relations with India.

The army also had well-formed foreign policy views and, unlike their Indian counterparts, had the means to implement them. Most Pakistani army officers believed that a dominant India needed to be balanced against a dominant Pakistan if there was to be peace in South Asia and

if the chief India–Pakistan grievance, Kashmir, was ever to be resolved. But they had little faith in the good offices of outsiders, such as the United States, in helping Pakistan achieve justice for the Kashmiris, and doubts about Washington's reliability as an ally. While some were privately worried about the increasing political disorder in Pakistan (stemming both from the spillover of arms, narcotics, and combatants from Afghanistan, and from India's hand in purely Pakistani ethnic and linguistic quarrels), most senior officers were proud of Pakistan's recent military performance, and confidant that a smaller Pakistan could hold off a more powerful India if it remained firm and true to its core principles. This implied a continuation of the nuclear program, which was widely understood to be Pakistan's "equalizer," not only against a suspected Indian nuclear program, but against India's much larger conventional forces.

There were also army officers and members of the intelligence community who felt that Pakistan should take the offensive against New Delhi, and carry the war into India by expanding support to Sikh dissidents and separatists. In some Pakistan army schools it was taught that India was an artificial creation which might yet unravel.[9] Indeed, the creation of Pakistan at the time of partition was considered to be only the first step on the road to the creation of a South Asia of many states and the elimination of a regionally dominant India. Zia had allowed his intelligence services to provide some support to Sikh separatists after 1984. There were officers, including many who had been actively supporting the gigantic operation in Afghanistan, who were eager to apply their techniques to vulnerable "India-held" Kashmir.[10]

Pakistan's civilian foreign policy establishment had its own, somewhat different perspectives on the question of relations with India and the United States. Since 1977 they had served as the interface between a military regime and the rest of the world. They shared the widespread assumption regarding Indian hegemonic ambitions, but were less persuaded that these could be countered merely by the acquisition of more firepower, or even nuclear weapons. They understood Pakistan's larger political and strategic vulnerabilities better than the military, and remembered the years before the Afghan war when Pakistan had dropped in significance to being considered a third-rate country. They were also somewhat embittered by the way in which the armed forces had brushed them aside, and most of them were eager to see Benazir succeed, as it would represent the further "civilianization" of Pakistan. As for India, they were willing to negotiate on critical issues, including Kashmir, but they had no clear idea themselves about what a normal relationship with India would be like. Like most foreign services, Benazir

Bhutto's civilian bureaucratic advisors were superb on tactics, but short on strategy.

Ms. Bhutto came to office with a few important assets and many liabilities. She possessed one great advantage: she was widely recognized and widely liked by the Americans – indeed, she had close personal ties with many influential American officials, going back to her years as a Harvard undergraduate. Because Pakistan was very dependent upon the United States for modern arms, economic assistance, and diplomatic support on Afghanistan, this was a tremendous asset, and made Benazir indispensable as far as the military was concerned. They knew of the tensions between the United States and Pakistan that had existed during the Zia years, even though many of them were concealed from the public. There were strong differences over the pace and direction of the Pakistan nuclear program and bitter disagreement over what "red lines" Pakistan had agreed not to cross, and whether it did cross those lines. There was also a growing difference of policy on Afghanistan, with Pakistan's intelligence services eager to press forward and the Americans content with having driven the Soviets out. Benazir's election promised, in American eyes, to put a brake on the nuclear program and to discourage Pakistani plans for expanding its influence in to Central Asia.

But Benazir also had many liabilities. Her only experience in politics was during the traumatic period before and after her father's imprisonment and execution. Her earlier career plans were to enter the Pakistani foreign service. Very few of her advisors were experienced in government. Her father's style was, at best, autocratic, and many of his wisest advisors had long since left the Pakistan People's Party.

Benazir was heavily dependent therefore upon the civilian and military bureaucracy for advice and direction. She never developed a coherent domestic and foreign policy of her own. She did, however, believe she could build a new relationship with India, one based in large part upon the accomplishments of her father in reaching an accord with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the Simla Summit of 1972.[11] There, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi agreed to a process by which outstanding disputes, especially Kashmir, could be settled. Benazir had accompanied her father to Simla and was part of the Pakistani delegation. Upon coming into office she attempted what she thought would be a fresh approach to India. In the words of the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) *Strategic Survey* for 1990:

> On assuming power Bhutto quickly sought a wide-ranging reconciliation with India, promoting many useful if modest agreements in the areas of travel, trade, cultural exchange, information transfers,

> drug trafficking, rail traffic, double taxation, border security and smuggling. Early on, too, Bhutto promised non-interference in the domestic affairs of India, especially in Punjab. Her own domestic weakness, however, may hamper her efforts to improve Indo-Pakistani relations (the same is true of her counterpart V. P. Singh). The attacks of her opponents, and the opinions of the army and the president, who, in 1989, accused India of having "hegemonistic" designs in South Asia, forced Bhutto near the end of the year to rein in her enthusiasm for rapprochement.[12]

Most of her energy was devoted to anticipating and countering the efforts of a wide variety of groups to embarrass or depose her. She remained fearful, even paranoid, about the intentions of the armed forces, and never really understood their institutional and ideological imperatives. Nor was she fully informed about key elements of Pakistan's foreign and security policy. While the ISI nominally reported to the prime minister, there is evidence that it did not tell her everything they were doing either in Kashmir or in Afghanistan. Kashmir was not an issue for Benazir Bhutto. Upon assuming office she made the usual proforma statements about the need to settle the issue, but it was not until open rebellion broke out in the state that she became more vocal, and, as we shall discuss in the next chapter, then largely as a result of domestic political pressures. But she also had no strategy to resolve the Kashmir problem before it became a crisis. She had not spoken much about the issue, but wanted to resolve it – or at least move towards its resolution – during the 1988–90 period.

Benazir Bhutto was initially optimistic about Kashmir. She was not the first Pakistani politician to call for a plebiscite at that time. That was to be the new president, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, who reintroduced the "unfinished agenda of partition" argument in 1989. But Benazir turned notably more hawkish after she barely survived a no-confidence vote on October 31, 1989, and, in the words of an informed Indian observer, the then high commissioner, J. N. Dixit, one of the sticks used by the opposition to beat her with was the "so-called compromising attitude toward India and her having failed to extract any compromise from Rajiv Gandhi, despite the alleged softness which he had shown toward Pakistan."[13]

These uneven perceptions of events are not unusual: perhaps the closest parallel would be the conclusion drawn by Saddam Hussein that Iraq had "won" the war against Iran, partially with the help of weapons of mass destruction, although the rest of the world thought that this bloody war had, at best, ended inconclusively.

A deteriorating political environment

The interaction of global, regional, and domestic developments made South Asia very unstable in 1990. The Kashmir conflict re-ignited just when both countries were losing the support of their former Cold War benefactors, and were beginning to grope their way forward toward an accommodation with new global realities. Democracy had been "restored" in Pakistan in 1988, and India underwent an important election in 1989. Both elections were applauded by Western analysts and there was a general assumption that liberal, two-party democracies would, in South Asia, as elsewhere, make war between them difficult if not impossible in the future.[14]

However, each country's government was weak and key political leaders had limited experience in managing India–Pakistan relations. They were drawing very different conclusions from events that had occurred just a few years earlier, especially Brasstacks. That was perceived as a triumph by Pakistan, whereas the new Indian leadership was not fully aware of its dangerous ramifications.

As for the personalities involved, for all the animosity evident between President Zia and the two Gandhis during the 1980s, one can also discern a certain degree of mutual familiarity and respect for each other. Prior to 1990, India–Pakistan relations were hostile, but stable. The 1990 crisis strained India–Pakistan relations to breaking point, but was also accompanied by a precipitous decline in the influence of the leaders who steered their countries through it. Benazir Bhutto was dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan on August 6, 1990, under article 56–2 (b), a constitutional provision since repealed. She lost the elections held in October 1990, which is now admitted to have been massively rigged by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, to Nawaz Sharif. The V. P. Singh government did not last the year out either: a minority Janata Dal government headed by Chandrasekhar replaced it with the support of the Congress Party from outside. These two governments, in turn, had short lives as well: Nawaz Sharif was deposed from office in 1993, then restored by the Supreme Court, then turned out again in the elections of October 1993. The Chandrashekhar government, too, lasted for only a few months before it was pulled down by the Congress Party.

The question that suggests itself here is whether a different leadership in one or both countries might have averted the 1990 crisis, or handled it in a very different way. In January 1990, not only were the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers unfamiliar with each other, but their domestic positions were subject to relentless pressures which few governments in

either country needed to face for years. In Pakistan this came from the military as well as the civilian bureaucracy and the political right; in India, it came from skeptical civilian officials, a vengeful Congress Party and an increasingly powerful BJP. However, the Kashmir turmoil was of transcendent importance to the national identities of India and Pakistan, and always had considerable *potential* to escalate – the developments that occurred in Kashmir in late 1989 and early 1990 probably would have been treated in the same way had there been strong governments present in both countries.

In the event, the Kashmir crisis intensified the instabilities that inhered within these already weak governments, which plunged them into a renewed cycle of mutual recriminations, threats, and counter-threats that have continued. The upheaval of the Kashmir crisis, coupled with unstable and weak central governments at that time, undoubtedly contributed to the general perception that the region was in crisis.

3 Kashmir

From Simla to chaos

Two different "Kashmirs" constitute the dispute between India and Pakistan. First, there is the physical state of Kashmir, the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, sometimes abbreviated as "J&K," and sometimes just as "Kashmir," which causes much avoidable confusion.[1] The former princely state of Kashmir consists of many diverse regions:

- The largely Hindu region of Jammu, south of the Pir Panjal range of mountains, that separates the Valley of Kashmir from the rest of India.
- The Buddhist-majority districts that comprise Ladakh, which is the subject of a separate dispute between India and China – the latter is in possession of some portions of Ladakh claimed by the Indian government.
- The Muslim majority districts of Mirpur and Muzzafarabad (now part of what the Pakistanis call "Azad" or Free Kashmir and the Indians call "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir").[2]
- The Northern Areas or Territories, consisting of Baltistan, Hunza, and the Gilgit Agency, sparsely settled, and predominantly Muslim territory; a portion of this region, north of the peak K-2, was provisionally ceded to China by Islamabad in an agreement reached on March 2, 1963.[3] This agreement contains clauses that provide for re-negotiation once the Kashmir dispute is settled between India and Pakistan.
- Finally, the "Vale" or Valley of Kashmir, centered on Srinagar (now called "India Held Kashmir" by the Pakistan government). The Valley contains most of the state's population and resources, and is the sub-region most often equated with Kashmir in the minds of Indians and Pakistanis.

These different sub-regions have very different ethnic and religious composition: Jammu is about 60 percent Hindu and 40 percent Muslim;

Ladakh is about 50 to 55 percent Buddhist, and culturally linked to Tibetan Buddhism (although the Kargil district contains a substantial number of Shia Muslims as does the Northern Territories). The Valley is overwhelmingly (about 90 percent) Sunni Muslim, but the Hindu minority includes one of the most important of Indian castes: the Kashmiri Brahmins (or Pandits) to which the Nehru family and many other senior Indian politicians and bureaucrats belong. Finally, Mirpur and Muzaffarabad are entirely Sunni Muslim.

The second typology of Kashmir is to be found in the minds of politicians, strategists, and scholars. This is a symbolic Kashmir, a place where larger national and sub-national identities are ranged against each other. The conflict in this Kashmir is as much a clash between identities, imagination, and history, as it is a conflict over territory, resources, and peoples.

Pakistanis have long argued that the Kashmir problem stems from India's refusal to accept the reality of Pakistan, and from its hegemonic aspirations; if it yields on these, then a peaceful solution to the Kashmir problem can be found.[4] For the Pakistanis, Kashmir remains the "unfinished business" of the 1947 partition. Pakistan argues that because both India and Pakistan accepted the UN Security Council resolutions of August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949, the Kashmiris should be allowed to exercise the right of self-determination in accordance with these resolutions.

Indians, however, argue that Pakistan, a state defined and driven by its obsession with religion, has irredentist aspirations in Kashmir, because it is unwilling to accept the fact of a secular India. The presence of this India questions the very need for Pakistan to exist at all, fuelling the Pakistani contention that Indians have never reconciled themselves to Pakistan.

These same concerns about dominance, hegemony, and identity are to be found within the state itself; whilst the minority Buddhist Ladakhis would prefer to be governed directly from New Delhi, in Jammu much of the majority Hindu population has long been discontented with the special status lavished upon the Valley by the Union government in New Delhi. Finally, the small Kashmiri Pandit Brahmin community in the Valley is especially fearful. It has lost its privileged position within the administration of the state and much of its dominance in academia and the professions; indeed, after the emergence of violent Muslim activity most of the Pandit community have fled the Valley, and live in exile in Jammu and in several Indian cities, especially New Delhi. Some of their spokesmen have demanded *Panun Kashmir*, a homeland for the tiny Brahmin community within Kashmir. In the early 1990s their plight

found particular support within the New Delhi establishment, where Kashmiri Brahmins are significant players.[5]

In addition to these conflicting identities, the "strategic" Kashmir has also played a very significant role over the years.[6] The military establishments on both sides of the border insist that Kashmir is critical to the physical defense of their respective countries. The Indian army believes that giving up the mountains of Kashmir would expose the plains of Punjab and Haryana, and even Delhi, to Pakistani attack. Delhi would then be "spitting distance away." Moreover, the Valley of Kashmir, the only real area of contention between India and Pakistan, is strategically important to India because of the communication links that run through it to Ladakh, where China controls a chunk of territory – Aksai Chin – claimed by New Delhi, and which was fought over during the 1962 India–China war.

The Pakistan army's view is, not surprisingly, quite different. Its officers believe that the inclusion of Kashmir into Pakistan would give it a strategic depth that it otherwise does not possess. While the whole of Pakistan is vulnerable to Indian air attack, the better part of India remains beyond the range of Pakistani aircraft. In Pakistani eyes, the Indian ground forces stationed in southern Kashmir threaten the Shakargarh salient, and, more importantly, the Grand Trunk Road linking Lahore and Islamabad.

The origins of the Kashmir conflict

How did geostrategy and identity become so inextricably intertwined in Kashmir? In 1947, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, like the other princely states, was not given the option of independence.[7] The Maharaja (a Dogra Hindu) delayed accession to either India or Pakistan, even when the state was invaded by "raiders" from Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province. There is speculation that the Maharaja himself was contemplating independence, and as one of the two largest princely states in British India (Hyderabad Deccan being the other), there was some incentive to explore the possibility of becoming a separate state. Theoretically, when the British left South Asia, "paramountcy" over the princely states lapsed and the princes were free to choose either India or Pakistan, or become independent. However, the British informed the princes that independence would not be tolerated, and that they had to choose one state or the other.

At this point, and on other related issues, there are strongly divergent views as to what happened. Pakistanis claim that the raiders were provoked by anti-Muslim atrocities committed in Kashmir by the

Maharaja's predominately Hindu army. Indians claim that there was a Pakistani plot to seize Kashmir by force and that there may have been British (and even American) complicity.[8] Thus, from the official Indian perspective there was an unprovoked aggression and the Maharaja's signature on the instrument of accession was legal and sufficient to enable India to help him defend the state. The conflict continued into the summer of 1948 and escalated to the point where regular armed forces of the two new countries – which had been a single force until a few months earlier – became involved. (Kashmir would become the focal point of another war between the two countries in 1965.)

From the Pakistani point of view, an accession by the ruler of a princely state (in this case the Maharaja of Kashmir) was subject to considerations of geographical contiguity, composition of the population, and above all to the wishes of the people.[9] These were criteria which had been applied by the British to the partition of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab, parts of British India proper. Pakistanis point out that India forcibly acquired Junagadh and Hyderabad on the principle that they were princely states with Hindu majority populations and geographically contiguous to India. New Delhi had not bothered that the ruler of Junagadh opted to accede to Pakistan and the ruler of Hyderabad preferred an independent status. When it came to Kashmir, however, New Delhi quickly abandoned these principles and became legalistic. It ignored the wishes of the Muslim-majority population and the contiguity principle, extracting the ruler's consent through blackmail. Once the Maharaja had signed the instrument of accession (and some Pakistani and foreign experts have claimed that the instrument was never, in fact, signed), India relegated the principle of self-determination and geographic contiguity to secondary position and pushed the legalistic approach – based on the wish of the ruler – to the forefront.[10] It is interesting, however, that Pakistan has not taken the question of accession to the international court system.

On this point the official Indian position is almost the exact opposite of Pakistan's. On October 27, 1947, a little over two months after the British left, Lord Louis Mountbatten – no longer the last British viceroy but India's first governor general – accepted Kashmir's accession to India with a caveat: that the question of Kashmir's accession should ultimately be settled by ascertaining the will of the people.[11] This pledge was subsequently reiterated by the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in speeches, statements, letters and telegrams.[12] India took the Kashmir dispute to the newly created United Nations on January 1, 1948, under article 35 of the UN Charter. It charged Pakistan with assisting the tribesmen and other invaders to violate her sovereignty.[13]

Pakistan lodged a counter-complaint accusing India of organized genocide of Muslims in East Punjab, Delhi, and other places in India, as well as the forcible occupation of Junagadh (whose Muslim ruler had acceded to Pakistan) and the manipulation of Kashmir's accession by fraud and violence.[14]

The Security Council, having heard both parties at length, passed two resolutions, one on January 17, 1948, asking parties "not to aggravate the situation but to do everything to improve it," and a second on January 20, 1948, establishing a mediatory commission eventually known as the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP).[15] UNCIP visited the area, met leaders on both sides, and after lengthy consultations tabled two resolutions on August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949. These were accepted by both states and were endorsed by the Security Council.[16] Taken together these resolutions provided for a ceasefire, demilitarization of the state, and a free and impartial plebiscite to be conducted by the UN. The ceasefire was quickly attained, but the issue of demilitarization proved to be insoluble. Because the second stage of demilitarization was not completed, the third stage of plebiscite has never been implemented.

At the ceasefire, Pakistan held about a third of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, including the Mirpur and Muzaffarabad areas and the Northern Territories of Gilgit and Hunza.[17] India retained control over Ladakh, Jammu, and the crucial Valley of Kashmir. Effectively, the war in 1947–8 partitioned the state of Jammu and Kashmir as the rest of the subcontinent had been sliced. The predominantly Muslim areas of Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, and the Northern Areas went to Pakistan, while India was able to control the non-Muslim-majority areas of Ladakh and Jammu. The Vale of Kashmir, still controlled by India, was the only part of the state that went against the overall logic of partition. It was a Muslim-majority region that had remained with India.

Thus, the chief conflict in Kashmir is over who controls the Valley. Pakistanis believe that a plebiscite in the predominantly Muslim area would endorse their claim over the territory; they accuse India of going back on its word of holding a plebiscite in the state. India charges Pakistan of not fulfilling the prior conditions of demilitarization for conducting the plebiscite. According to the UN resolutions, Pakistan was supposed to remove its soldiers from the one-third of Kashmir that it controlled (Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, and the Northern Territories). Indians have maintained that, unless there is demilitarization of Kashmir, a plebiscite is unfeasible.[18] Without prior demilitarization, Indians fear, Pakistan will unfairly influence the outcome of the referendum. They accuse Pakistan of not keeping its part of the bargain, and insist that

under the circumstances India could not be expected to keep its promise to hold the plebiscite. Further, India points to the ratification of the instrument of accession that was originally signed by the Maharaja and was ratified by the Jammu and Kashmir State assembly in which 73 out of 75 members had been nominated. This ratification had no basis in law or political morality and was repudiated by the United Nations. In addition, India argues that participation in the subsequent elections was an expression of people's desire to remain in India.

While both governments claim to speak for the people of Kashmir, both fail to take into consideration, or even contemplate discussing, the real Kashmiri demand – of independence. The cry that has repeatedly torn through the Valley – most violently in the late-1980s – was "*azadi*" or freedom. While New Delhi is unwilling to talk about *azadi*, and claims that the insurgency in Kashmir is Pakistan-inspired, Islamabad has been equally uncomfortable with the idea of Kashmiri independence.[19]

The diplomatic record

The failure of diplomacy to bring an end to the dispute long before the onset of the 1990 crisis is remarkable, given the amount of international as well as regional attention paid to it. India and Pakistan have gone to war twice over Kashmir itself (1947–8 and 1965). Kashmir-related considerations affected the strategies of both countries in their other conflicts. For example, during the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, New Delhi was reluctant to pull troops out of their positions on the India–Pakistan border and move them to face the Chinese. In the 1971 war, fought largely in East Pakistan, both sides skirmished in Kashmir with Pakistan launching an offensive in the Chamb and Punch sectors, although the war ended soon afterward.

After the 1947–8 and 1965 wars, and even after the 1962 India–China conflict, there were concerted efforts to resolve the Kashmir problem. In 1948 the United Nations became deeply involved – Kashmir is the oldest conflict inscribed in the body of UN resolutions and is certainly one of the most serious.[20] After the 1962 conflict there were intense American and British efforts to bridge the gap between Delhi and Islamabad, but these efforts came to nothing, although six rounds of talks between India and Pakistan took place between 1962 and 1963, with a view to arriving at an amicable solution. The 1965 war was followed by the entry of the Soviet Union as a regional peacemaker.[21] The Soviets did manage to promote a general peace treaty at Tashkent, but increasing dissatisfaction with the terms of the agreement led to open opposition in Pakistan, and eventually the Indians intervened

directly in what had become a civil war between East and West Pakistan in 1971.

The absence of the influence of a great power on the Kashmir problem has been a consistent feature of the dispute. Beyond their regional Cold War patronage, both the United States and the Soviet Union have played significant, often parallel and cooperative roles in the subcontinent.[22] Over the years the United States has had considerable influence with both India and Pakistan; at one point the Soviet Union, generally regarded as pro-Indian, temporarily moved closer to Pakistan, even providing military assistance to Islamabad and brokering the 1966 Tashkent agreement. Yet, neither superpower was able to bring an end to the dispute.

The Second Kashmir War

The standard Indian position points to the Second Kashmir War (1965) as clinching evidence that Kashmiris do not want to be part of Pakistan, and if Kashmiris are currently upset with New Delhi, it is only temporary, and the handiwork of Pakistani intelligence services.[23] The Second Kashmir War occurred as India was going through a particularly difficult period. A little more than a year before, on December 26, 1963, the vial that is believed to contain a strand of the Prophet Mohammed's hair disappeared from the Hazratbal mosque in Srinagar. The mosque has always been a focal point of religious and political activity in the Valley – in October 1993, for example, Kashmiri separatists took over the shrine, and precipitated a major crises. The vial was, however, mysteriously restored, and all ended well. A few months later, on May 27, 1964, Jawaharlal Nehru, India's prime minister since independence, died, leaving an uncertain succession. As seen from Pakistan, New Delhi appeared to be divided and weak. As the succession struggle continued into the next year, India must have appeared to Pakistani strategists as particularly vulnerable. Pakistanis were also increasingly worried about the growth of U.S.–Indian ties after the 1962 India–China conflict.

Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar in July–August 1965, infiltrating thousands of irregulars and special units into Kashmir from Pakistan-administered parts of the state, and perhaps from Pakistan itself. The identity of these raiders is vague. Publicly, Pakistan claims there was a spontaneous campaign mounted from Azad Kashmir, not Pakistan itself. India claims this was a well-orchestrated offensive led by Pakistan army regulars. Accounts by various Pakistani officers concede that half the infiltrators in 1947 were "muhajids," raising the unanswered question as to the composition of the other half.[24] As to

1965, Pakistani officers have spoken of Gibraltar being launched too soon. In any case, Gibraltar failed miserably as Kashmiri Muslims identified the infiltrators, and the Indian military retaliated by capturing the Haji Pir Pass and the area north of Tithwal, the two biggest infiltration routes. This action would have serious portents in 1990, when a similar infiltration in Kashmir may have made both Indian officials think about broad retaliation, and made Pakistanis apprehensive that there might be a repeat of 1965. Pakistan's armed forces hit back across Jammu's Chhamb-Akhnur sector. India took the war further south, attacking Pakistan in the Sialkot-Lahore sector and across the desert in Sindh.

Unlike the 1947–8 war, 1965 was a short affair. The UN sponsored a ceasefire that became effective on September 23, 1965. Although both sides have since claimed victory in 1965, the war actually ended in stalemate. India and Pakistan retreated to their earlier positions. Until 1990, this was the last real confrontation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Following the 1965 war, Pakistan became increasingly preoccupied with its eastern wing. With a population that exceeded West Pakistan's, the East could install a prime minister of its choice in the Pakistani capital. West Pakistanis fought hard to retain control and provided the spark for rebellion in the East. Aided by India, the Bengali Mukti Bahini conducted guerrilla raids into what would become Bangladesh.

The Simla Agreement

The 1971 India–Pakistan war resulted in the partition of Pakistan and the creation of a new country, Bangladesh. This time a dominant India excluded outside powers from the region and sought to reach a bilateral understanding with Pakistan – now led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Bhutto met in the Indian hill station of Simla in late June and early July 1972. There, after a long and complicated negotiation, which was concluded only at the last minute, Bhutto and Indira Gandhi committed their countries to a bilateral settlement of all outstanding disputes.[25] This included Kashmir, which was mentioned in the last paragraph of the text. The Simla Agreement envisaged a systematic process of *bilateral* discussions – with no outside guarantors or mediators. But, the Simla text does not prohibit other methods, subject to the agreement of both sides.[26]

Most Pakistanis argue that Simla was negotiated under duress. Not only had Pakistan lost the war in 1971 and was unable to prevent its dismemberment, but over ninety thousand Pakistani POWs were held

by India. Pakistan had to acquiesce to the Indian demand regarding bilateral settlement but diluted its significance by inserting a prior paragraph to emphasize that the principles and purposes of the charter of the United Nations shall govern the future relations between the two countries. In interpreting the Simla agreement, India often dwells on paragraph two (dealing with the principle of bilateralism) while Pakistan focuses on paragraph one (referring to the United Nations). These contradictions have persisted.

After Simla both sides continued to press their claims to the disputed territory using all the old arguments. Ironically, divergent interpretations of the Simla Agreement itself added yet another layer of India–Pakistan disagreement. For India, Simla had abrogated the UN resolutions as a point of reference for resolving the Kashmir dispute. After all, Indian leaders reasoned, the two parties had pledged to work directly with one another, implicitly abandoning extra-regional diplomacy. For Pakistan, Simla supplemented but did not replace the operative UN resolutions on Kashmir. While it pledged both countries not to alter the territorial status quo unilaterally, it did not rule out external mediation if both New Delhi and Islamabad agreed to seek it.[27] In any event, the Line of Control (LOC) had become the *de facto* boundary between the Indian and Pakistani parts of Kashmir, although this line has been repeatedly crossed by military personnel from both sides, the most spectacular movement being that of Pakistani forces in the Kargil sector in 1999.[28]

Kashmir recedes

After the Simla Agreement the Kashmir dispute moved out of the international limelight. The Indian government began to view the Line of Control rather than the UN cease-fire line as a more or less permanent border. The Pakistanis, of course, were aware of this replacement, but consistently argued that the UN resolutions were still as operative and valid as they were before the signing of the Simla Agreement. For Pakistan, the Simla Agreement did not replace the UN resolutions and the conversion of the ceasefire line into a Line of Control did not produce a *permanent international* border. Guided by these differing interpretations, both sides continued to press their respective claims whenever the opportunity arose, but for seventeen years Kashmir was widely regarded outside the region as either “solved” or on the way to resolution. This was because within two years of signing the Simla accord, both principals, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi, got into political difficulties: Mrs. Gandhi because of her “Emergency,” and Bhutto because of his increasingly strained relations with the generals.

Two other issues received international and regional attention: the Indian nuclear explosion of 1974 and Pakistan's subsequent response in the form of its own covert nuclear weapons program; and the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979.

Because the principle of bilateralism was incorporated into the Simla Agreement, the Pakistanis, in a strategically disadvantaged position after 1971, waited for the initiation of a bilateral dialog. Until the late 1980s they abided by the terms of Simla and rarely, if ever, brought the Kashmir issue before international fora. Yet for twenty-four years no concerted efforts were made to resolve the Kashmir problem, nor was there much evidence of the revival of the once-vociferously acclaimed "spirit of Simla." Indeed, Article VI of the Simla Agreement said that there should be another meeting, but for reasons, which are not entirely clear, this meeting was never held. Between 1972 and 1994 India and Pakistan held forty-five bilateral meetings. Only one was fully devoted to Kashmir, and that session was held only in Islamabad in the first week of January 1994.[29]

The onset of crisis

Most students of the region date the onset of the 1989–90 crisis to July 2, 1984, when a political coup orchestrated by Indira Gandhi removed Farooq Abdullah from the chief ministership of Kashmir. But active central meddling in Kashmiri politics had been going on for years. In 1953, Nehru jailed Kashmir's most prominent and influential politician, *Sher-e-Kashmir* ("The Lion of Kashmir") Sheikh Abdullah, for encouraging separatist tendencies in the state. The sheikh headed the National Conference Party, and was responsible for bringing the subcontinental freedom movement to the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (where the movement protested the Hindu ruler, not the British). Despite this, the sheikh and Nehru remained close, personal friends.[30]

Abdullah presided over the social and economic transformation of Indian-controlled portions of Kashmir – especially the Valley – and under his guidance educational and training institutions grew quickly. Eventually, a new generation of educated professional Kashmiris evolved, and later became the separatist movement's core. The sheikh himself was independence-minded. If the opportunity had arisen he might have declared Kashmir an independent state. However, Sheikh Abdullah's own party, the National Conference, was not entirely behind him on this issue: many of its leading members felt comfortable with Kashmir's special status within India.[31] The ratification of the instrument of accession and Article 370 (the provision in the Indian Constitution

awarding special status to Kashmir) was completed after he had been jailed.[32]

Further, the Valley Muslims (and their Hindu Pandit neighbors) did share a special Kashmiri culture – "Kashmiriyat" – which was quite distinct from anything found in Pakistan, or for that matter in the Mirpur and Muzaffarabad areas of Azad Kashmir. For many years, ties of religion meant less than ties of culture to Kashmiri Muslims, and they valued the opportunity to function with a high degree of autonomy within the Indian Union. Article 370 was introduced in the Indian Constitution to safeguard this special status and higher autonomy for the state. Finally, separatism was a difficult practicality. All of Jammu and Kashmir, but especially the Valley, was virtually an armed camp. A number of Indian army divisions were based there to defend against both the Pakistanis and (especially after 1962) the Chinese.

Moreover, Sheikh Abdullah, the one man who could sway popular Kashmiri opinion, was jailed until the mid-1970s.[33] He was only released in early 1975 after G. Parthasarathy, Indira Gandhi's special envoy, and Mirza Afzal Beg, Abdullah's negotiator, reached a broad arrangement, including an electoral alliance.[34] This was a few months away from the "Emergency," which Indira Gandhi imposed on the entire country that year. The National Conference and the Congress formed a coalition but that soon fell apart. In 1977, in Kashmir's *first free election*, Abdullah became the state's chief minister. He served five years until he died on September 8, 1982. "Kashmir became quiet – and beautiful as ever; it seemed as though the problem had been solved. From the perspective of Delhi, it was a golden phase, both the rulers in Kashmir and the populace seemed content as if a marriage had been made."[35]

Doctor Farooq Abdullah, the sheikh's son, became the chief minister, winning a succession battle against his brother-in-law, Ghulam Mohammed Shah. State assembly elections were held again in 1983. Prior to the elections, Indira Gandhi offered Farooq an electoral alliance. Farooq turned her down, and the ensuing election campaign was marred by violence and the introduction of communal appeals. The National Conference won a convincing victory in the heavily Muslim-majority Valley, while Indira's Congress fared well in predominantly Hindu Jammu. These elections polarized the population along communal lines for the first time since independence. From this point on, the situation began to deteriorate. Kashmir, however, received little attention. New Delhi had its hands full just to the south, where the Punjabi Sikh separatist leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was calling for a separate "Khalistan" from the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

1984–1988

Not only did Dr. Farooq Abdullah refuse to enter into an electoral alliance, he further upset Indira Gandhi by trying to unify India's opposition parties on the sensitive issue of center–state relations.[36] Upset by his prominence in the all-India anti-Congress (I) opposition grouping, Indira Gandhi began to actively pursue Farooq's removal from Kashmir's chief ministership. The Indian Constitution accords certain rights to the Center to dismiss a state government on the governor's advice. When the then governor, B. K. Nehru, refused to follow Mrs. Gandhi's bidding, she replaced him with Jagmohan Malhotra (in his first tour as governor of Jammu and Kashmir). Jagmohan engineered Farooq's dismissal after the Congress (I) had succeeded in inducing the defection of a bloc of Farooq loyalists in the state assembly.[37] Farooq was branded pro-Pakistani and anti-Indian. Earlier that year Farooq may have made matters worse by visiting the Sikh separatist Bhindranwale in Amritsar. The final straw, however, was a cricket match in Srinagar (between India and the West Indies) on October 13, 1984, where a section of the audience shouted pro-Pakistani slogans and waved Pakistani flags.

Farooq was replaced by his brother-in-law, G. M. Shah, while Indian paramilitary forces were rushed to Kashmir to keep peace. This political coup ignited a cycle of political degeneracy that would increasingly alienate young Muslims from Indian democracy. A number of observers, foreign and Indian, as well as Pakistanis, have singled out this decision as being particularly fateful and unwise. The eminent British scholar, W. H. Morris-Jones wrote: "It seemed an act of gratuitous folly not to accept the electoral verdict of 1983 which saw Congress defeated by what was, after all, the well-established state party."[38] For the Indian journalist, M. J. Akbar, Kashmir was one battleground in an

> unceasing war of attrition between Delhi and the non-Congress governments in which decency and democracy were the prime victims. The hook-or-crook methods used to try and break the governments of Karnataka, Andhra, and Kashmir were a blot on the very concept of a federation.[39]

Of course, New Delhi's view at the time was that India is not a confederation, in which states can behave as they please, but a union, in which the central government has the right and the power to make and unmake states at will.

Following Indira Gandhi's assassination in October 1984, and two years of ineffective rule by G. M. Shah, Farooq Abdullah did a political

flip-flop that severely strained his own credibility in the Valley by aligning his National Conference with Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party. After the widely despised G. M. Shah regime was ousted by the governor in March 1986, Farooq had demanded new state assembly elections.[40] As a condition for restoring him to power in Kashmir, Rajiv Gandhi insisted that Farooq's National Conference join the Congress (I) in an electoral alliance and a governing coalition. Reversing his 1983 anti-Congress stand, Farooq accepted the offer, asserting to his followers that by doing so he would increase the flow of resources for economic development to Kashmir. The 1987 election thus pitted a Congress (I)/ National Conference alliance against a coalition of smaller parties under the banner of the Muslim United Front (UF).

In what was to be the final blow to any sense of decency in the portions of Kashmir administered by India, the elections were massively rigged to ensure victory for the National Conference/Congress (I) alliance. Farooq Abdullah became chief minister once again. The elections, however, completely alienated young Kashmiris whose experience with Indian democracy had gone sour twice in less than three years.[41] The National Conference had been a catchment area for Kashmiris; they might have resented New Delhi's tactics, but were also uncomfortable with open rebellion. By merging the two entities in so blatant a fashion – the National Conference and the Congress (I) even engaged in election-rigging together – Farooq left young Kashmiris with no choice but to join the extremists. As pro-Congress journalist M. J. Akbar writes, "compromise with the very people who had manipulated 1984 ravaged Farooq Abdullah's credibility. He was charged with betraying his father's fifty-year legacy of pride. It created a vacuum where the National Conference had existed, and extremists stepped into that vacuum."[42]

The inefficiency and corruption of the new Farooq government became particularly galling in these circumstances.[43] The chief minister himself was viewed as aloof and ineffective. There was little headway towards any economic development. Adding further to the disgruntlement caused by the political machinations of 1984 and 1987, many well-educated Muslim youths, denied their voice in Kashmiri politics, were unable to find remunerative jobs.[44] Sumit Ganguly writes: "As swelling numbers of college-educated Kashmiris discovered bleak employment prospects, their anger and frustration turned against what they correctly perceived to be a corrupt and insensitive regime."[45]

By mid-1988, writes Ved Marwah, a retired police officer who knew Kashmir well, the situation had rapidly deteriorated. While the government in Delhi was beset with its own problems (Rajiv was under attack on corruption charges and the opposition seemed to be gaining

ground; Punjab was still the hotspot, and in June had witnessed *Operation Black Thunder*, a major action to flush militants out of the Golden Temple in Amritsar), Farooq seemed incapable of doing anything. Jagmohan wanted to crack down, but New Delhi never gave him the requisite forces. New Delhi was convinced, however, that the militancy in Kashmir was sponsored by Pakistan.

Meanwhile, in Kashmir, just before the Pakistani and Indian independence days of August 14 and 15, 1988, a series of explosions rocked the Valley. On the 14th (Pakistan's Independence Day) the Pakistani flag was flown in Srinagar and the anti-government protests erupted into sporadic violence and organized strikes. The next day, black flags were displayed on India's Independence Day. On August 16 a procession shouting anti-India slogans clashed with the police at Nallahmar Road in Srinagar. One person died, fifty persons were injured, a police jeep and a number of shops were gutted. The same night, there was an attempt to set the Hindu Rishi Pir temple in Srinagar on fire.

The rioting and violence became worse on August 17 with the news that Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq had died in a plane crash. This led to police firings and deaths in Srinagar, Baramula, Phulwama, and Bhaderwah, among other places. Militants retaliated with bomb explosions. In Pakistan, the military withdrew from overt rule, thus turning that state into a "democracy" overnight. Popular support for democracy was manifest on November 16, 1988, when the opposition PPP won the election (albeit without an absolute majority) and Benazir Bhutto became prime minister. The ushering in of democracy, and the popular appeal of Kashmir in Pakistan, gave the militants legitimacy and led to an escalation of the situation. The Pakistani people expected *their* government to liberate Kashmir and placed the government under pressure to live up to its mandate.[46]

Meanwhile, in the Valley, bomb blasts, clashes with the police, and protest marches continued unabated. On August 26 after the Friday prayers to offer "fateh" to Zia, the crowd turned violent and the police fired on the demonstrators. On August 31, a bomb went off in a bus in Anantnag. On September 18, four young men were caught outside the house of a senior police officer. In the scuffle, one of them, Ajaz Dar, was shot dead. He became the first "martyr" for the Kashmiri cause. According to Robert Wirsing (who quotes a source in the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs) a total of 390 violent incidents occurred in 1988 – a single direct attack on civilians, six on security forces, 142 cases of bombing and arson, and 241 were classified "other." There were twenty-four explosions in public spaces that killed fifteen persons and injured sixty-nine.[47]

Early 1989 saw an escalation of the sporadic violence, the bombings, and the processions, but with the summer melting of the snows in the mountain passes, the intensity of violence increased manifold. Wirsing finds an almost six-fold increase, with 2,154 incidents in 1989. Attacks on civilian populations surpassed attacks on security forces. There were 506 bombings in public places that year, and although fewer people died in the explosions, that may simply have been a function of the continuous *bandhs* (public boycott and strike) and *hartals* (strikes) the Valley had to live through in 1989. In April, *India Today* magazine reported that: "The eight-month-old hit-and-run tactics of the militants have escalated. Even in broad daylight, they open fire with their automatic weapons on police patrols and stations and attack government and private buildings with powerful explosives."[48] The report said that five persons had died and more than four hundred had been injured since February.

Following a police raid in Anantnag town and the subsequent death (while in police custody) of the 70-year-old father of Shabbir Shah, the popular Kashmiri leader, a four-day *hartal* was called. Shah was president of the Kashmir People's League (a rival of Farooq's National Conference). In Kahnyar and Naidkadal, neighborhoods of Srinagar, the police and militants fought pitched battles.[49] When the paramilitary and the police were forced back into their barracks, the young men who had fought off the Indian might were carried on the "shoulders of admiring mobs who showered them with kisses and milk in traditional Kashmiri revelry." Even Srinagar's houseboat-owners, who were fast losing business, were supportive of the movement. Photographs of former Pakistani president, Zia-ul-Haq, were openly sold in roadside stalls. Areas such as Borikadal, Kahnyar, Zainakadal, and Naikadal were referred to as *chhota* ("Little") Pakistan. The revolt was well on its way.

In April, Rajiv Gandhi appointed a former chief of the army staff, General K. V. Krishna Rao, as governor of Kashmir "in the simplistic belief that the appointment of a former army general would send the right signals to the militants."[50] He did not have much of a chance. Even before he could settle in, G. M. Shah, Farooq's brother-in-law and political opponent, was asking for Jagmohan's return as governor. In May, separatists launched the "Quit Kashmir" movement (reminiscent of Gandhi's "Quit India" call in 1942). As another Independence Day anniversary approached in August, the Valley, for all practical purposes, was almost lost to India. In July, militants ambushed a bus carrying CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) personnel, killing two soldiers. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) openly claimed responsibility for

this attack. Pakistan's Independence Day (August 14) was celebrated once again this year with enthusiasm, while a complete *bandh* was observed in the Valley on India's Independence Day (August 15). The Indian national flag was burnt in public protest gatherings, and black flags were flown all over the city. The arrest of Shabbir Shah led to widespread protests and disturbances in the Valley. Police firings added to the death toll in the riots, and led to further protests and disturbances.

In November, the Congress government led by Rajiv Gandhi was defeated in the general elections, and replaced by the Janata Dal government headed by V. P. Singh. The Janata government wanted to remove General Krishna Rao on the grounds that

> the new government was looking ahead in case of [*sic*] Abdullah's resignation and imposition of governor's rule. Many names were considered including Jagmohan's, who was ultimately appointed, although it was known that Farooq Abdullah might resign if Jagmohan was made Governor.[51]

The confusion in New Delhi – revealed in the removal, appointment, and re-appointment of governors in Kashmir – is worth noting. This confusion extended to Srinagar, where the civil servants and police officials were divided in their loyalty between the chief minister and governor and, then again, between the successive governors to the state, Krishna Rao and Jagmohan. This lack of cohesiveness and sense of purpose in the Indian government found its reflection in the confusion regarding its Kashmir policy and India–Pakistan relations. In 1989, young Kashmiri Muslims assassinated policemen, judges, and other government officials with impunity. As *India Today* editorialized in September 1989:

> Today, thanks to rampant nepotism, corruption and notorious maladministration, Farooq's compact with his people seems to have broken. He has lost their trust. Some of them have turned to guns, and others, who initially blamed only Farooq's government for their woes, now increasingly blame New Delhi.[52]

On December 8, 1989, in what became a watershed event, Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of the home minister in the newly constituted Janata government, was seized from a public bus and kidnapped. The kidnappers demanded the release of five prominent JKLF members who were in jail. At this crucial juncture, Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah was absent (he was on holiday in London, but would return before the kidnapping saga had played out). The state cabinet decided that it would

be safest to acquiesce to the kidnappers' demands. The predominant view in New Delhi was the same. Although Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed did not insist that the five militants be released to ensure the safe return of his daughter, his cabinet colleagues were unwilling to take chances with Rubaiya's safety.

In retrospect, the separatists later admitted that the kidnapping had been a risky proposition. The kidnapping of an unmarried Muslim girl, even if she was the daughter of the Indian home minister, would not have gone down well with the tradition-bound people in Kashmir.[53] If something had happened to her, the JKLF would have been the subject of popular opprobrium, and perhaps the group would have been denied food, money, and shelter by the local population. As it turned out, the biggest loser was the Union government. In a panic, different government agencies and officers opened separate lines of communication to the kidnappers. These intermediaries, because they wanted the deal to be struck through themselves, offered the militants more and more. The competitive bargaining, ultimately between the different government agencies, gave the militants a better negotiating position. A fairly neutral international body, Asia Watch, subsequently observed "the outcome, interpreted as a major political victory for the militants, encouraged other, newly emergent armed organizations."[54]

While 1989 had seen momentous developments, the following year was calamitous. After the Rubaiya fiasco and the rapid increase in separatist violence, New Delhi changed governors once again, bringing Jagmohan back on January 18, 1990. Jagmohan promulgated "Governor's Rule" after he was sworn into office on January 19 in Jammu, the state winter capital.[55] The newly appointed governor arrived in Srinagar on January 21 to the accompaniment of widespread rioting and demands for the release of over a hundred young Kashmiris, who had been detained by the CRPF.[56] Jagmohan provides a graphic description of the situation in Kashmir when he took charge. In an interview, after his second removal, he claimed

> every component of the power structure had been taken over by the terrorists. Subversive elements had infiltrated the police ranks and a portion of the police was on the verge of mutiny. Civil services had broken down completely. Lawyers, doctors and even the press were dominated by militants.[57]

Jagmohan has asserted that the situation improved during his term of office, although this judgment is not borne out by the record or by most other first-hand observers.

Ved Marwah, who traveled to Srinagar as Jagmohan's reluctant advisor, says that there were no policemen on the streets, even the CRPF had been forced into their barracks, and most senior police officers had disappeared.[58] Srinagar, it seemed, had been lost to India. The situation was only controlled after the Indian army had been brought in, but at heavy cost. The army fired at unruly mobs and reportedly killed thirty persons. The next day, the Jammu and Kashmir Police went on strike, protesting the alleged death of four of their comrades by the central paramilitary force, the CRPF. They conducted a procession in full uniform with their weapons in their hands demanding "*azadi*." Two days after the police rebellion, on January 24, four Indian air force personnel were shot as they were waiting for their bus.

In February, after the killing of the director of the government-run television station in Srinagar, employees of the All India Radio and Doordarshan refused to work in the Valley anymore.[59] Three Kashmiri leaders, Mir Mustafa, an ex-member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Ghulam Nabi Butt of the Congress, and Abdul Sattar of the Communist Party, were killed in quick succession.[60] Whether it was to celebrate the killing of an Indian agent, or a successful attack on a symbol of Indian statehood, or at the *namaz-e-janaza* (funeral prayers) for a martyr to the Kashmiri cause, the crowds in Srinagar and elsewhere were getting bigger and bigger. There seemed no way of controlling the protesters. On February 24, as Marwah was riding to the airport, he saw the procession en route to the Charar-e-Sharif shrine, south of Srinagar. He describes it thus:

> It was an unbelievable sight. It appeared as if the entire population of Srinagar had come out to join the procession. The State Transport [Authority] buses had also been commandeered in addition to other means of transport for taking the processionists to the shrine. Many were sitting on top of the buses, unmindful of the cold, rain, and sleet. There were women and children and everyone was shouting *azadi* slogans and showing the 'V' sign.[61]

On March 6, the Indian army fired on processions in the towns of Zakura and Rawalpura, near Srinagar. Seventeen died, reviving memories of the January riots and deaths in Srinagar.

Meanwhile, politics continued as usual. According to Marwah, a close and reliable observer of these events, Jagmohan, apprehensive that he would be removed as governor after having brought the situation back in "control," dissolved the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly on February 19, 1990, without consulting the Home Ministry in New

Delhi.[62] Except for the BJP, all other parties, including the Janata Dal, which was in government, criticized Jagmohan. Most observers of Kashmir expected another change in governors. In early March, an all-party delegation arrived in Srinagar, speaking in different voices. While Janata Dal members such as George Fernandes went into downtown Srinagar to "talk" with the people, Rajiv Gandhi was briefed by senior police officers. Only the BJP seemed to be on the governor's side. The visit itself was a clear indication of the center's unhappiness with Jagmohan. Meetings between the governor and the delegation went off badly.

To make matters worse, at a meeting with Rajiv Gandhi and other Congress leaders at Srinagar's Centaur Hotel, local Kashmiri leaders began shouting slogans of *azadi* and were joined by the hotel staff.[63] Ordinarily, this would have been unheard of, as those presented to the leaders from Delhi would have been vetted for their political views, but obviously no local leader could afford to stand apart from the agitation.

Since February, Kashmiri Pandits had begun to flee the Valley as a spate of killings began to target them. Governor Jagmohan may have taken advantage of the Hindu Pandits fleeing to provide justification for his brutal methods. The kidnapping and subsequent killing of Mushirul Haq, vice-chancellor of Kashmir University, his secretary, and H. L. Khera, general manager of the public sector Hindustan Machine Tools factory, one of the few large industrial units in the Valley, in April further strengthened Jagmohan's hand. He clamped indefinite curfew on Srinagar, causing tremendous hardship and further alienating the Kashmiri population.[64] Soon after, Farooq Abdullah described Jagmohan as a Genghis Khan.[65] During the summer the death of moderate and influential Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq, president of the Awami Action Committee, angered the young freedom fighters, considered as militants by the Indians. Fearing violence, the local police imposed a curfew and prohibited the funeral procession, but his body was forcibly seized by the mourners. The ensuing police firings led to an estimated forty-seven deaths.[66]

Despite Jagmohan's claims to the contrary, his brutal approach helped build greater support for separatism. Moreover, he found it impossible with a divided administrative apparatus to single-handedly resolve a situation that was out of control. Week-long curfews were not merely inconvenient, they brought the economy to a standstill. If the security forces controlled some territory during the day, the nights were dominated by the young men who were referred to by the Pakistanis and Kashmiris as freedom fighters. It was in this context that the 1990 crisis occurred. Some analysts, especially in Pakistan, single out these events

as being a major cause of the 1990 crisis. New Delhi, unable to fight the militancy, may have wanted to take the battle to the training camps in the Pakistani part of Kashmir, thus posing a security threat to Pakistan.[67]

Crisis and war aversion: Wular and Siachin

The Kashmir dispute, which has waxed and waned over the years, now seems to be one of the world's most intractable problems. Yet, upon closer examination two components of this crisis seem to have been managed satisfactorily. No discussion of the Kashmir conflict – which pertains largely to the Valley – would be complete without some mention of Siachin and Wular, each a case of regional conflict management. Both offer insights into the origin and resolution of India–Pakistan conflicts.

Even before the armed clash between India and Pakistan in Kargil, their armies were engaged in a bitter and seemingly irrational conflict over control of the Siachin Glacier, located approximately 150 miles northwest of Srinagar, but still part of the state of Kashmir. Siachin has not been resolved, but it has been contained, albeit at a high level of violence and enormous cost.

The Siachin Glacier is located in an area where both the UN ceasefire line and the Line of Control are ill-defined. The inhospitable climatic conditions in the region may have persuaded both India and Pakistan to refrain from detailed demarcation of the line. Indian attempts to retain physical possession of the Siachen Glacier area and Pakistani counter-attacks to dislodge them have resulted in several violent clashes.[68] For almost twelve years both India and Pakistan have been engaged in armed combat in this mountainous glacial region over the physical possession of "one-thousand square miles of the cathedral peaks and icy wilderness," undoubtedly the "world's loftiest battleground."[69]

The India–Pakistan confrontation in the Siachen Glacier, which is now technically part of Jammu and Kashmir, continues, although both countries have been careful not to allow their intermittent clashes in the icy mountains to snowball into a major war. Nor did they allow the conflict to spread.

After the UN-mediated ceasefire in 1949, the line between India and Pakistan was demarcated up to point NJ9842 at the foot of the Siachen Glacier. Beyond that point the terrain was almost inaccessible; perennially snow-clad mountains that no one had bothered about. The 1949 description of the ceasefire line reads: "Thence northwards along the boundary line going through point 18402 up to NJ9842."[70]

Following the India–Pakistan war of December 1971, and the Simla Agreement in July 1972, the ceasefire line was converted into a "Line

of Control" extending from the "Chhamb sector on the international border [to] the Turtok-Partapur sector in the north." The detailed description of its northern end was that from Chimbatia in the Turtok sector "the line of control runs north-eastward to Thang (inclusive to India), thence eastwards joining the glaciers." This vague formulation sowed the seed for the bitter dispute to follow.[71]

The Siachen dispute surfaced in 1984. India claimed that it needed to control the glacier because it was a gateway to Ladakh, the Buddhist part of Jammu and Kashmir, alongside the disputed border with China. Pakistan wanted Siachen on the grounds that it could be used by the Indians to deny them access to the Northern Areas. Both claims are greatly exaggerated, but military action by the Indian and Pakistani armies were motivated by fears that the other would gain control of the area.

According to Robert Wirsing, there is little evidence pointing to any one of the parties being the aggressor in the Siachen dispute:

> Precisely who shot first is probably impossible to determine. Which of the two armed forces had the right to be on the glacier – because the question of legitimacy of the two sides' territories claims has never been submitted to impartial adjudication – is a matter obviously open to disagreement.[72]

Wirsing notes, however, that ample evidence points to the Indian armed forces as being the first to establish permanent posts on the glacier and that they had prepared themselves long and well for the task.

The principal actor in militarizing Siachen was the Indian Lieutenant General M. L. Chibber who headed India's Northern Command in 1983–4. After his retirement, Chibber has ruefully described the build-up to *Operation Meghdoot*, as the plan to take over the glacier was code-named.[73] Chibber sent the first army reconnaissance mission to the area as early as 1978. The expedition was the result of the new thinking of a more pro-active, post-1962 generation of army officers, who felt that India had lost the Aksai Chin salient primarily because of New Delhi's neglect. The Indian government had refused to allow Indian army reconnaissance expeditions to the higher Himalayas in the 1950s and, unknown to the Indians, China had been able to build the Xinjiang–Tibet highway, which proved strategically significant during the Sino-Indian war of 1962.

After the 1978 expedition, it was decided that the Siachen area would be regularly patrolled by the Indian army during the summer. The severe winter conditions ruled out the establishment of any permanent posts.

After Chibber took over the northern command, and perhaps because of his earlier experience in the region, Siachen became a major dispute. The Pakistanis, apprehensive of Indian army expeditions in the area, lodged a protest on March 29, 1982, and twice again in late-August 1983. Chibber found the protest notes particularly disturbing since this was the first time Pakistan had formally claimed the entire area between NJ9842 and the Karakoram Pass that connects China with Pakistan. In September–October 1983, Chibber claims, Indian intelligence detected a column of Pakistani troops moving into the area, ostensibly with the purpose of occupying the vantage points. However, bad weather prevented the Pakistanis from setting up any permanent posts. (It needs to be pointed out here that many Pakistanis argue that no evidence exists that Pakistan had ever contemplated establishing a military post in Siachin.) The Indian army's Northern Command finally swung into action and, preparing over the 1983–4 winter, established the first permanent post on the glacier on April 13, 1984, two months ahead of the regular mountaineering season. The mountaineering expeditions, mostly comprising Westerners, came from Pakistan's Northern Areas, and the continuation of this practice was seen by the Indians as strengthening Pakistan's claims to the area.

Thereafter, as Indian analyst A. G. Noorani describes it,

> an extremely costly, futile, and wholly avoidable conflict had begun in the world's principal mid-latitude mountain glaciation. It could have been averted had Indian and Pakistani leaders acted in 1983 to freeze the status quo as it then existed. The establishment of a permanent picket in the area by India constituted a breach of the Simla Agreement.[74]

The countries had committed themselves in the Simla Agreement to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations and not to unilaterally alter the Line of Control, and although the line had not been violated, both countries had acted unilaterally to alter the situation, ignoring the bilateral negotiating process.

Although the strategic importance of the Siachen area has been extensively debated on both sides of the border, the political, administrative, and military establishments in both countries have done little to de-escalate the conflict. Some estimates put troop deployment in the area at almost three brigades between the two countries. Pickets are constantly firing at each other. In 1987, in a series of relatively large attacks and counterattacks, the Indians maintained an advantage by controlling two key mountain passes.[75]

India has wanted to freeze the situation as it existed after Operation Meghdoot, while Pakistan wants to revert to the status quo that existed previously. Despite the disagreement, however, there has been some realization that this battle in the world's loftiest battleground cannot be allowed to snowball. In 1985, when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Zia-ul Haq met, they agreed in principle to talk about Siachen. By 1993, six rounds of foreign secretary-level talks had taken place. At the fifth round in 1989, a breakthrough had apparently been reached. After issuing a joint statement in Islamabad on June 17, 1989, hinting at some preliminary agreement, the Indian government thereafter denied that the talks had been conclusive.[76] This may have been occasioned by electoral considerations, in that the agreement envisaged the withdrawal of forces from the Siachin area and its demilitarization; this was believed to be a confession of weakness in India that could affect the electoral prospects of Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress Party.

A second component of the larger Kashmir dispute relates to the Wular Barrage located on the Indian side of the LOC on the Jhelum River.[77] By and large, Wular has also been successfully managed.

In the mid-1980s India proposed to build a dam on the Jhelum River below Lake Wular, in Ningli, near Sopore, forty kilometers from Srinagar. According to the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 between India and Pakistan, the waters of the six rivers of the Punjab were allocated between the two countries. India could use the three rivers in the east – Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej – while Pakistan was allocated the three western rivers, including the Jhelum. India was required to let the waters of the western rivers pass unrestricted into Pakistan, the lower riparian. It could, however, use the waters of western rivers for four distinct purposes: domestic use (drinking, washing, etc.), agricultural use (irrigation), a restricted use for hydroelectric power that returned the water used to the river, and any "non-consumptive" use that did not reduce the flow in the river. The treaty specifically identifies "any control or use of water for navigation" as a non-consumptive use – and this was what India claimed it was doing: increasing the navigability of the Jhelum between Sopore and Baramula.

The Pakistanis viewed this differently. They claimed that India was storing water – the barrage would hold water for a period before releasing it – and storage of water from the western rivers in any man-made works was prohibited by the Indus treaty. The bilateral arbitration mechanism provided in the treaty was activated. The Indians promised to ensure that the water flow in the Jhelum would not be reduced, and this was verifiable. Even as the Kashmir situation was exploding, Indian and Pakistani officials were talking about the Wular Barrage. Indians

called it the Tulbul navigation project. On September 22, 1989, the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* reported a preliminary agreement. However, after the full text of the draft agreement was published in another newspaper, a furor ensued in Pakistan. The draft was later revised. The important thing, however, was that the basic disagreement had been worked out, and now it was a matter of working at the margins. The revision process was carried out despite the rebellion in Kashmir and the 1990 crisis. Since 1986 the dispute has been dealt with first at the Indus Commission level and later by government officials from both sides. The important point to be emphasized here is that neither India nor Pakistan want to see the dispute made the subject of international arbitration. Thus, in a corner of South Asia where agreement seems hard to come by, this case offers important lessons in conflict management.

Explaining the Kashmir crisis

A number of explanations have been offered to explain the origins of the Kashmir crisis (narrowly defined in terms of the crisis in the Valley), which in turn became an important part of the larger, compound crisis of 1990. Unsurprisingly, there is considerable disagreement between Indians and Pakistanis (and within each country), as well as among outside observers, about the true "cause" of the events that in late 1989 and 1990 brought the state, and eventually India and Pakistan, to a point where nuclear war was a possibility. Three major explanations have been offered by students of these events.

First, mainstream Pakistani opinion has always regarded Kashmir as the unfinished business of the 1947 partition, and has accused India of not fulfilling its promises to allow a plebiscite that would determine the future of the state. With some modification, and rarely expressed as stridently or as plainly, this is also the position of the British and American governments, both have retreated from their earlier support of the plebiscite – an idea, incidentally, that was originally proposed to the United Nations by Nehru himself, but which has long since been rejected by the Indian government. The Americans and the British now argue that "the Kashmiris" must be consulted in the final determination of the status of Jammu and Kashmir. Until the late 1980s it was widely believed that Kashmir's anomalous situation could be managed indefinitely and peacefully for years to come. Indeed, suggestions that Kashmir might be "settled" were rejected by Indians and Pakistanis in the early 1980s, who felt that the Simla process and bilateral negotiations might yield an agreement.[78] By the late 1980s these positions had changed: Pakistanis, tired of waiting, began to demand a resolution of

what they saw as an unjust and unsustainable situation, and Indians began to dig in further as signs of Kashmiri discontent became more evident.

A second explanation of the Kashmir crisis is offered by a number of scholars who have studied the process of social change in Kashmir – especially the Valley – and have noted the tremendous expansion of education as well as of social and economic aspirations without the emergence of corresponding employment opportunities. They argue that young Kashmiris underwent a revolution of rising expectations, but that their avenues to economic and political empowerment were blocked or manipulated. Thus, there was a core, a cadre, of young, disenchanted Kashmiris who were ripe for radical views. By the mid-1980s decades of education and development had turned Kashmir from a very low-literacy region – especially among its Muslims (the Hindus always had a strong educational tradition) – into one with a reasonably high literacy rate. The expansion of electrical services, the growth of the VCR culture, and the availability of broadcasts from both India and Pakistan led an Indian analyst to conclude that

> given the dramatic expansion in literacy and media exposure, a generation of Kashmiris has now emerged that is far more conscious of its political rights and privileges. This generation is also more likely aware of political developments well beyond the Valley of Kashmir.[79]

This social revolution took India by surprise. Except for a few scholars and some administrators, it was neither examined nor were its political implications discussed.[80] In retrospect, it is easy to see how the acceleration of social change had such implications, but on the whole there was a failure of understanding and, for the governments, an intelligence failure, when it came to an appreciation of how much Kashmir had really changed.[81]

A third perspective on Kashmir suggests that Indian mismanagement and misgovernment was the main problem. There are several chronicles of the disillusionment wrought by what is now recognized as a systematic mismanagement of Kashmir affairs by both the state government in Srinagar and the Union government in New Delhi. However, the nature of that mismanagement is disputed. Indian hardliners argue that the central government was far too tolerant of separatist inclinations in the state and too supportive of corrupt Kashmiri politicians: they should have cracked down on both much earlier.[82] They want an early repeal of Article 370, the special provision in the Indian

Constitution that envisages special rights for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Taking a cue from the Jewish settlements in Jerusalem, some political leaders have also suggested large-scale resettlement of people from the rest of India in Kashmir, thus reducing the proportion of the original Kashmiri population.

More liberal observers take the position that the solution to bad democracy is more democracy, and that New Delhi's failure to offer Kashmiris the same rights as other Indians led to their ultimate alienation, pushing them into Pakistan's arms. These two arguments are mutually exclusive, and since the events of late 1989 India has been groping for a way to bring normalcy to Kashmir. The hardliners argue that concessions and compromise only perpetuate the problem, offering hope to foreign-inspired militants; those who argue for negotiations and a "political" solution claim that India has been creating its own enemies by the brutal tactics favored by such officials as Jagmohan. Both sides point to the way in which India has managed other dissident and separatist movements (Nagas, Mizos, Sikhs, Naxalites, and so forth); this argument is an important one, somewhat beyond the purview of this study, but we will return to it in the last chapter.

The period prior to and during the 1990 military crisis witnessed a steady worsening of the law-and-order situation in Kashmir. An informed judgment holds that:

> The situation in the Valley took a decisive turn for the worse in the aftermath of the firing on Maulvi Farooq's funeral procession. The three incidents which contributed more [*sic*] to the rise of militancy in the Valley than anything else were the mishandling of Rubaiya Saeed's kidnapping case; searches, arrests, and firings at Chhota Bazar and Hawal on January 19–21, 1990; and the firing on Maulvi Farooq's funeral procession.[83]

In January 1990, the government resolved to fight fire with fire: New Delhi returned former governor Jagmohan to Kashmir. As Jagmohan has himself put it: "The best way of solving the crisis is to assert the authority of the state and create an impression that, no matter what the cost, the subversionists and their collaborators will be firmly dealt with and eliminated."[84] Jagmohan's appointment signaled New Delhi's resolve to crush the Kashmir militants rather than negotiate with them. Farooq Abdullah, who had opposed Jagmohan's appointment, resigned immediately, Jagmohan dissolved the state assembly a month after taking office, and finally New Delhi imposed direct governance or "President's Rule," as it is called, on the state within six months.[85]

Jagmohan began a sustained crackdown with day-long curfews and house-to-house searches, in an often inhumane effort at containment. By this time, the secessionist movement had begun to affect every aspect of life in the Valley and adjacent areas. Local businesses suffered from the dwindling flow of tourists. Insurgents called for general strikes. When coupled with government curfews they brought economic activity to a virtual standstill.

New Delhi also sent in thousands of additional paramilitary soldiers to implement Jagmohan's tough policies.[86] On January 20, 1990, growing tension between the militants and security forces exploded into what would be the first of many spasms of violence. Police in Srinagar fired on a crowd of demonstrators, and an estimated thirty-two people were killed. Roughly one hundred people were killed in the two weeks following New Delhi's imposition of direct rule over the state.[87] One reporter described the emergence of a disturbing pattern of violence:

> Trigger-happy troops mean more deaths which is exactly what the militants want. Every new "martyr" means a *namaz-e-janaza* (funeral prayer) from the *mohalla*'s mosque which inevitably results in an angry mob (marching down the streets) resulting in more firings, more martyrs and more mobs . . . there could not be a more vicious cycle.[88]

No doubt, India's errors in its handling of the Kashmir problem had greatly exacerbated the political situation there. The way New Delhi handled the appointment of state governors, for instance, reduced the possibility of a solution. The governor of Jammu and Kashmir, unlike in other states of the Indian Union, is the pivotal political and executive authority. In early 1989, the incumbent, Jagmohan, was literally "on extension till further orders." Because he had already completed his five-year tenure in the state, his continuing in the position was a sure prescription for drift. This was hardly conducive to his taking any long-term or decisive measures to meet the deteriorating law-and-order situation in the state. Relations between Jagmohan and Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah were seriously estranged, and they often contradicted each other's orders. New Delhi was too preoccupied with its own political battles to look carefully at Kashmir.

When a new governor (Krishna Rao) was appointed, he lasted for only six months. Jagmohan was brought back, but he too left after another six months, to be replaced by a former head of India's external intelligence service, Girish Saxena. Krishna Rao's appointment and later return was predicated on the belief that a former army chief's presence

in Srinagar would have a salutary effect on the morale of the security forces while signaling New Delhi's strong resolve to the militants. Moreover, the Indian army, the police forces, and the civil administration could have been expected now to work better together. None of this happened, and Kashmir continued to fester. Jagmohan's return to Kashmir was perhaps the Janata Dal government's concession to the BJP, which was supporting the government from outside. Contrary to expectations, it was not Krishna Rao but Jagmohan who signaled strong resolve. In fact, he laid the precedent for widespread repression in the Valley. The first six months of 1990 were among the most brutal periods witnessed. Jagmohan seldom took any action against errant soldiers or policemen. Continuous curfews meant people did not have food and their businesses did not just slow down, they ceased completely. Girish Saxena's appointment to the governorship was even more bizarre. It gave a face to intelligence gathering. If Saxena would have been useful as a coordinator of intelligence on militant groups in the Valley and across the border, his appointment as governor implied that good intelligence operations might solve what was essentially a political problem.

Understandably, India's Janata Dal coalition that came to power in November 1989 was busy maintaining itself in office, but its intrinsic weakness and inherent fragility were exacerbated by the fact that it was a conglomerate of political parties knitted together only by a common interest in the fruits of power – no ideology bound them together, nor were there affinities of region, community or class. Further, the Janata government did not possess a working majority in parliament. This ensured that the government remained weak and in a state of perpetual tentativeness. A revival of the backward castes reservation issue, generated by the Mandal Commission Report, further enfeebled the Janata government within a few months of its installation, and led to its ultimate downfall after holding office for a little over a year. Thus, the larger 1990 crisis, and the specific Kashmir crisis, occurred during a period of great central weakness in India.

In search of an explanation

None of these explanations are mutually exclusive and none seem to fully explain the onset of the rebellion in Kashmir in the late 1980s. Nor do they provide a plausible explanation of the strategies that might resolve the Kashmir crisis. Undoubtedly, the answer to the questions "how did the crisis start?" and "how might it be resolved?" lies in a combination of factors.

The different explanations for the Kashmir crisis fall into four categories. The first holds Pakistan's "not-so-hidden-hand" responsible – blaming the ISI, the rapid growth of Madrassas (Islamic religious schools) in the Valley, and military/ financial cross-border support, which complemented and operated through the growing number of Madrassas in the Valley. However, second, a large number of observers, including official Pakistani sources, blame India's unwillingness to offer credible "self-determination" to the Kashmiris as the prime cause of their discontent. In addition, there exists plenty of evidence of Indian malpractices and misgovernance that seems to have exacerbated the situation. Third, many observers have pointed to the growth of ethno-national fervor and the emergence of ethnic subnationalism in Kashmir in a way that challenges the Indian state. Some authors have attributed this to accelerated social and economic change, others have pointed to the breakdown of the ethos of Kashmiriyat, an ill-defined, almost ineffable concept of the confluence of Islamic, Hindu, and uniquely Kashmiri cultural strains in the region.

Finally, as Ganguly argues, a combination of the slow and imperfect growth of political mobilization of the Valley Kashmiris, especially among the younger generations, the decay of Indian political institutions, and continuous administrative mismanagement and political malpractice in Kashmir by at least those dealing directly with the state, were the major factors that explain the rise of the ethno-religious separatist movement in Kashmir.[89] Kashmiris were mobilized too late and too quickly and, therefore, imperfectly. "Kashmiriyat" remains, but was not the rallying point for this mobilization. Undoubtedly Pakistani support is an underlying factor. Indeed, some Pakistanis, especially those in the religious parties, speak proudly of their assistance to the Kashmiris, and their right to help the latter free themselves from an oppressive Indian state. But the "foreign hand" alone was not, as New Delhi has claimed, the decisive factor. For that matter, Indians would have to look dispassionately within Kashmir for the real causes of turmoil.

As for the failure to *resolve* the Kashmir dispute, three factors seem to be particularly important. First, over the long run, the existence of the Cold War made both the United States and the Soviets see this regional dispute as part of the systemic East–West struggle.[90] Later, when the superpowers finally began to compose their own differences, neither found any truly important interest in South Asia, apart from their indirect confrontation in Afghanistan. Kashmir was important only insofar as it concerned their respective regional partners; yet neither was willing to be dragged into the Kashmir issue by those partners.

While Indians and Pakistanis often based their regional calculations on the premise of outside support for their position on Kashmir, this support has been limited and constrained. For many years the Soviets provided India with an automatic veto in the United Nations on Kashmir-related resolutions, and backed New Delhi diplomatically. The Pakistanis became more dependent on the United States for political and military support, but could never get the United States to offer security assurances against India, precisely because Washington was afraid of being sucked into the Kashmir impasse. Washington and Moscow made several inconclusive efforts to mediate the dispute, but each was wary of getting drawn into a purely regional dispute. Ironically, the 1990 crisis, with its possibilities of a nuclear dimension, did bring the United States back to the region, and we shall discuss that diplomacy at length in Chapter 5.

Second, neither India nor Pakistan has shown much flexibility over the years. India's objective has been to gradually and systematically erode the special status that its own constitution had extended to Kashmir under Article 370,[91] eventually making compromise unnecessary. It also treated the problem as "solved" by the Simla Agreement, and resented Pakistan's attempts to internationalize Kashmir. This dual strategy of no change within Kashmir, and no discussion of this issue with Pakistan or others, is a policy that failed to prepare New Delhi for the epochal events that were to unfold late in the 1980s. India rejected the plebiscite option, it rejected a strategy of accommodating Kashmiri demands, it excluded Pakistan from its Kashmir policy, and it has stubbornly opposed outside attempts to mediate or otherwise assist in a settlement of the problem. Yet it lacks the resources, the will, or the strategy to deal with the Kashmir problem unilaterally. The use of force to wrest Kashmir from India has often alienated the Kashmiris, providing the Indian government with the perfect excuse to avoid negotiations.

Finally, it must be added that the Kashmiris, while patently victims, have not been reluctant to exploit the situation for their own, sometimes narrow ends. A significant number of Kashmiris have always sought independence from India *and* Pakistan, which ironically brings the two states closer together. They disagree as to who should control Kashmir, and the mechanism for determining Kashmiri sentiment, but they are unified in their opposition to an independent state, a development which is seen in both Delhi and Islamabad as potentially catastrophic for their internal politics. Thus the seemingly well-intentioned proposal, heard frequently from Americans and concerned outsiders that Kashmiris be "consulted" or have a voice in determining their own fate, is potentially

threatening to the two regional powers. The Kashmiris themselves, exemplified by Sheikh Abdullah, have often tried to play off the two countries against each other in order to ensure autonomy, a strategy that backfired for the sheikh when he was kept in custody almost continuously for over twenty years.

4 From domestic insurgency to international concern

By December 1989 a series of violent incidents greatly inflamed popular passions in Pakistan and northern India and brought the weak, minority governments in both states under considerable internal political pressure to do something. A military crisis became imaginable. These events attracted the attention of outside powers, and the Kashmir crisis was transformed from one of domestic concern to India and of great interest to Pakistan, into a confrontation between the two states that had military, and even nuclear overtones. This chapter traces the emergence of an international crisis; subsequent chapters will explore the role of the United States and its nuclear dimension.

Kashmir on the boil

Robert Oakley, the American ambassador to Islamabad during the crisis, recalls that before 1990, Kashmir was not a major irritant in Indo-Pakistani relations:

> Kashmir was so calm it was not discussed . . . there was a series of meetings during 1989 between the two prime ministers and the defense ministers and the foreign ministers and the foreign secretaries – no one raised Kashmir. Punjab always; but Kashmir, no.[1]

In early 1990 this changed dramatically. As the situation in the Vale of Kashmir deteriorated, forty years of antagonism burst in fury and the Simla process appeared to be in jeopardy. New Delhi accused Pakistan of waging an unconventional war against India by arming and training the Kashmiri Muslim "terrorists." From the Indian perspective, Pakistan appeared to have developed a low-cost strategy to destabilize its larger and stronger neighbor without risking the near-certain prospect of defeat in a conventional military encounter. Islamabad's response was

that it was only providing diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiri "freedom fighters," but that it had eschewed military or other material support. Pakistani leaders further charged that the Kashmir insurgency was the product of decades of Indian abuses in the state, not of Pakistani meddling; this claim, as we have seen, was not without some merit. Most commentators, Indian and others, agree that the primary cause of the Kashmir insurgency must be found in India's domestic failures.[2] Pakistani support for the militants is typically viewed as an important but secondary factor in the Kashmir imbroglio.[3]

There is some irony in these charges and counter-charges because India's new prime minister, V. P. Singh, had campaigned for an immediate, effective and *political* resolution of the many separatist conflicts in India. He assumed office on December 2, 1989, and his message was one of national healing in the wake of Hindu–Muslim communalism, and sustained confrontation between New Delhi and disaffected elements in Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Punjab, as well as Kashmir. He had also crusaded against caste conflict, although he would further incite caste antagonisms in the fall of 1990, just before he was ousted as prime minister, by implementing the recommendations of the Mandal Commission.

Anxious to turn his words into deeds and take two steps in the direction of moderation and conciliation, V. P. Singh appointed a Kashmiri Muslim, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, as his home minister. The Home Ministry is responsible for domestic political intelligence, and the home minister is the political head of India's vast paramilitary apparatus, which always had a strong presence in Kashmir. Singh thought that Sayeed would best understand the sentiments of his fellow Kashmiris; instead, he inadvertently provided them with a fresh target.

One week later, on December 8, Rubaiya Sayeed (Home Minister Sayeed's daughter) was kidnapped and held hostage. From this point on, the descent into chaos was precipitate. The kidnapping, widely regarded as the turning point in the crisis, demonstrated to the militants and their supporters in Pakistan that the V. P. Singh government lacked resolve, and was disorganized and divided. Several different officials had vied with each other for the privilege of negotiating with the guerrillas at various times during this episode. To the just-defeated Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress Party, as well as the emerging militant pro-Hindu BJP, this incident seemed to confirm their warnings about a "soft" policy toward the militants and the need for a firm hand in dealing with the Valley separatists. For many, it was also proof of a "foreign hand" – in this case, Pakistan's, behind India's troubles. The militants also

undertook bolder operations against Indian security forces, ambushing military convoys and attempting open engagements.

These events, and the unprecedented scale of violence, transformed the Kashmiri insurgency from a purely internal issue into an India–Pakistan conflict. Oakley, viewing the scene from Islamabad, remembers that the initial popular uprising in Kashmir was "primarily spontaneous." He adds, however:

> Pakistan, willy-nilly, began to play a much more active role. Unofficially, groups such as Jamaat-i-Islami [an Islamic political party] as well as ISI [Pakistan's main intelligence organization] and the Pakistani army, began to take a more active role in support of the Kashmiri protests. Training camps of various kinds multiplied. . . . There was much more activity. There were more people and more material going across the border from Pakistan into Kashmir.[4]

One of the Indian participants in the policy process, J. N. Dixit, then India's high commissioner to Pakistan, traces the origin of the crisis to two events which "became a critical factor in the foreign policies of both India and Pakistan." The first was Rajiv Gandhi's defeat and Janata's advent to power, the second was the kidnappings and the increase of violence in the state.[5]

As the war of words escalated, public interest and pressure began to mount, but not evenly within each country. A trip through India and Pakistan at this time by one of the authors revealed striking regional differences *within* each country in the intensity and passion of the public. In Pakistan, feelings ran very high in the Punjab and in cities where large numbers of Kashmiris had settled. There was much less interest in Sindh, and virtually none in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, which was bleeding from its own unrelated ethnic and sectarian conflicts. In India, public sentiment was stronger in Delhi than any other city. Delhi had in 1947 become the home to a large number of Punjabi refugees from Pakistan and was later to become a BJP stronghold; in 1990, it also became home to large numbers of Kashmiri Hindu refugees fleeing the Valley.

Pakistan's varied responses

While all sides concede that there was outside support and encouragement being provided to the dissidents from Pakistan, there was no consensus on the significance of that support. Indian hardliners argued that the entire uprising was being plotted in Islamabad, and that Indian politicians and bureaucrats had unwittingly became accomplices to a

Pakistani gambit by their weakness and vacillation.[6] Former governor Jagmohan firmly believed that Pakistan was openly assisting the militants by posing and answering the rhetorical question: "Where do you think the Kalashnikovs come from? Pakistan is running training camps and supplying weapons. Take their propaganda machinery. All you have to do is switch on Pakistan TV."[7] Apropos, the Kashmir militants were displaying greater sophistication in their tactics. Indian intelligence officials were being deliberately targeted, women and children were being used as human shields to cover militant acts of violence, and sniper rifles with silencers began to appear.[8] These advanced urban guerrilla tactics clearly indicated an external involvement in their training and equipment. Other Indian observers, close to the situation, made the argument that Pakistan had been trying to suborn the Kashmiris for decades, but had not succeeded. This was accurate both in 1948 and in 1965 when Pakistani raiders and operatives were captured and handed over to the Indian government, and there was no evidence of Kashmiris collaborating with Pakistan. The eagerness with which Kashmiris now sought Pakistani help, which had been on offer since at least 1984,[9] when the JKLF began to negotiate with the Pakistan intelligence services, suggests a radical change occurring over the intervening years.

The question of Pakistani support to the Kashmiris, and the degree to which they facilitated the transfer of militants from Afghanistan to Kashmir, lies at the heart of the subsequent crisis between India and Pakistan; it was the suspicion that India would move militarily against the training camps organized for the militants that raised the possibility of Pakistani military escalation, which could have led on to a nuclear response. One Indian view of this strategy holds that:

> Pakistan had come to realize by the late 1970s that they cannot take Kashmir away from India by force. Zia, therefore, decided to wage a silent, proxy and low-cost war against India by fomenting terrorism and secessionism in Punjab and Kashmir. The whole operation was masterminded by the ISI, an empire in itself, reporting directly to Zia. After his death, the ISI recognized no civilian authority and had a free run to such an extent that even Benazir Bhutto had no control over it.[10]

A knowledgeable American expert corroborates this view, and states that key Pakistanis started believing that "a combination of indirect warfare, supporting surrogates materially and politically, and adding a certain amount of Islamic zealotry" could succeed in detaching Kashmir

from India.[11] In consequence, Pakistan's Kashmir policy began to change around this time. The ISI began "finding greater receptivity with key decision-makers in making the point that Kashmir was an increasingly vulnerable point for India. The argument continued that no responsible Pakistani leader could afford to ignore the opportunity or, 'the duty' as it was called, to help Kashmiris who were less than content with India."[12]

These Pakistani convictions were strengthened by the rapid growth of an Intifada-type movement in Kashmir that began "to look like perhaps the early stages of what happened in Afghanistan."[13] They were further encouraged by a perceived loss of administrative control by the Indian political leadership in dealing with the growing Kashmir crisis. Indeed, several elements in Pakistan, especially the right-wing religious parties, discovered an opportunity opening up in Kashmir to avenge India's bifurcation of Pakistan some two decades earlier, and army officers privately talked of using their nuclear weapons program as an umbrella under which they could mount a concerted effort to wrest Kashmir away from India.[14] Pakistani intelligence agencies and several private organizations had been actively supporting the Kashmiri militants. It remains unclear exactly which groups were supported by Pakistan, which were supported by private groups, and which were officially sponsored to undertake unregulated covert operations – there is evidence of all three.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto initially took a cautious and low-profile stand on the deteriorating situation, not wanting to disrupt the rapprochement she had begun with Rajiv Gandhi. Even Indian analysts acknowledged Islamabad's surprise and wrote that Pakistan seemed to have forgotten the Valley.[15] Her government was itself caught by surprise when Kashmiri discontent finally erupted on such a massive scale. It became a target for the wrath of hawks and opportunist opposition politicians in Pakistan who began accusing her of betraying the Kashmiri cause.[16] As the situation on the ground grew more violent, Pakistan's opposition parties demanded that she take a stronger stand and support the Kashmiri insurgents. In early February 1990, during the deliberations in Pakistan's National Assembly, opposition politicians called on the government to pursue a *jihad* (holy war) in Kashmir. On February 10, the leader of the Jamaat-i-Islami urged the government to build nuclear weapons to meet the Indian threat.[17]

Since Benazir Bhutto did not know the new Indian leaders as well as she had come to know Rajiv Gandhi, she sent a distinguished Pakistani diplomat, Abdul Sattar, as a special envoy to New Delhi in December 1989, to explore how amity could still be maintained despite the worsening conditions in Kashmir. Just appointed as Pakistan's

ambassador to Moscow, Sattar had been a former high commissioner to New Delhi and foreign secretary in Pakistan, and was widely regarded by Indian officials as having hardline predilections toward Delhi. It was his understanding that he was to deliver a message that Prime Minister Bhutto desired to maintain amicable relations with India.[18]

In New Delhi, Sattar found that, among others, Foreign Minister Gujral and Prime Minister Singh were wholly sanguine about Kashmir, and felt that the current difficulties being faced there reflected a passing phase. The Indian attitude was summed up in a phrase offered to Sattar: "Sometimes the wind starts blowing strongly." According to Sattar, again, the subject of Kashmir was raised very briefly during his meetings with V. P. Singh, who told him that New Delhi was concerned about reports of Pakistani support for the "secessionists and separatists" in Punjab and Kashmir. Sattar says he was "taken aback" by the rising concern over Kashmir in the Indian media, which at that time was more strident than the government in their accusations of Pakistani complicity in the uprising.[19]

Sattar's return to Pakistan was widely covered in the press, where it was generally greeted as an important step in reviving the dialog that Benazir Bhutto had established with the previous government on a range of issues, including the Siachin dispute. But as far as Kashmir was concerned, there was little understanding in the Pakistani press for acceding to any Indian request to eliminate, let alone reduce, Pakistani support for the Kashmiri dissidents, which was regarded as a matter of "principle."[20] The press quoted Sattar as saying that his trip was "successful,"[21] but this optimistic assessment was not shared by the Indians. In truth, his mission was not considered very important by New Delhi due to a message from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs "not to take Sattar too seriously."[22] The official Indian view was that the mainspring of insurgency lay within Kashmir, but Pakistan was fueling it from across the border.

Yaqub: the ambiguous emissary

Pakistan's ruling troika – Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, and Army Chief Mirza Aslam Beg – met to discuss the Kashmir situation on February 3, 1990.[23] The mood in Pakistan had also begun to change. Earlier, the Pakistani hardliners had become silent, whereas a few weeks before that, they had been accusing Benazir Bhutto of being "soft" toward India, and of selling out the Kashmiris. Even hawks like the Azad Kashmir President, Sardar Abdul Qayyum, were quoted as approving Benazir's change of direction as now "on the

right line."[24] This change in mood was explicable, not only due to the situation in the Valley worsening, but also because high expectations had earlier been generated and then dashed when a Benazir–Rajiv agreement on Siachin was shelved due to the compulsions of the impending Indian elections in November 1989.

Pakistani hawks now expressed concern about the next "mission" going to India, one to be headed by the Pakistan foreign minister, Sahibzada Yaqub Khan. His visit to New Delhi is especially important, because he is alleged to have issued a veiled nuclear threat.[25] The details of this visit have been pieced together by interviewing several participants in these meetings from both countries, and from retrospective analyses by sources close to Benazir Bhutto. Yaqub, it may be recollected, was not Benazir's choice as foreign minister, having been Zia's foreign minister. When Benazir became prime minister on December 1, 1988, in a deal brokered by the United States Embassy, Yaqub's continuation as foreign minister was part of the package she had to accept. This was to ensure "continuity in foreign policy" – meaning according to one of her supporters, that she would show a willingness not to consciously attempt to break with the "Ziaist" world-view.[26] Nevertheless, "she embarked on the dual track of a genuine détente with India, and a search for a modus vivendi with Kabul."[27]

Yaqub was directed by the defense committee of the cabinet to convey a "tough message" regarding Kashmir. He requested flexibility in this regard, knowing that such a message could trigger a needless crisis. Yaqub conveyed Pakistan's concern to the Indian leaders, while emphasizing the strong sentiments prevailing in Pakistan, because Kashmir was an "emotional issue." In a meeting with the Indian foreign minister, Inder K. Gujral, the latter seemed to show some understanding of Pakistan's domestic political necessity to express sympathy for the Kashmiri militants. However, Yaqub's subsequent meeting with Prime Minister Singh went indifferently. The same message was conveyed, but Singh maintained that the domestic politics of Pakistan were its internal matter, and India had no interest in them.

At a later dinner meeting, where the press was present, verses from the great poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz were quoted by Gujral and Yaqub Khan. Those by Gujral referred to "lovers who had lost each other." But those recited by Yaqub were about "lovers being separated by objective circumstances." This exchange of verses created an impression in India that Pakistan was conveying an oblique warning. In the perception of some Pakistanis, on the other hand, Gujral was hoping, somewhat optimistically, to reverse the long-standing hostility between India and Pakistan during his tenure, but was disappointed when this did not

happen. This disappointment might have colored his later judgment about these exchanges.[28]

In the Indian perception, Yaqub Khan was cold and unfriendly. His initial request was that no reference be made to Rampur – the princely state in India where his ancestors had been the rulers – or to the Simla Agreement. A warning, deliberately couched in harsh language, was conveyed supporting self-determination in Kashmir. This warning was also conveyed to Prime Minister Singh, and repeated at a press meeting.[29] An Indian cabinet meeting was held subsequently, in which it was decided to reciprocate by warning Pakistan to "keep off Kashmir." Without doubt the Indian posture was guided by disturbing reports about the growing militancy in Kashmir; it coincided with a threat by the JKLF leader, Amanullah Khan – he was living in Pakistan – that he would march thousands of his supporters into the Valley.

In truth, there were *three* meetings between Yaqub Khan and the Indian leaders. The first, with Gujral, conveyed a "hard" message, suggesting that India needed to resolve the Kashmir problem by according a free choice to the Kashmiris regarding their continued association with India. Apparently, Gujral was unsure of himself, because the Janata government was new in office. His reply to Yaqub Khan in this meeting was deemed insufficiently resolute. This was corrected in the second meeting by Prime Minister Singh, who also held the defense portfolio, a position that he had also held in Rajiv's government at the time of the Brasstacks crisis. Following this meeting, India decided to reciprocate with a "hard" message to Yaqub Khan. Gujral delivered this message at a third meeting with Yaqub later in the day, following a dinner arranged by the Pakistan High Commission.[30]

To discern whether the Yaqub meetings in Delhi had a nuclear dimension requires large inferences to be drawn from the ambiguous language used in these conversations. Yaqub Khan is believed to have drawn attention with the words, "the clouds are roaring with thunder," and "there is lightning in the skies." These remarks might have suggested a nuclear threat, but much lay in the ears of the listener. Opinion is divided among close observers of these events whether Yaqub Khan would have indulged in such crude threat-mongering, given his cultivated style and long experience in foreign affairs, or whether he was especially suited to perform this task in a suitably circumlocutory and ambiguous manner. The possibility cannot be ruled out that too much had been read into these conversations; but some anxieties undoubtedly arose in the Indian leadership.[31]

One informed Pakistani account has it that Yaqub exceeded the limits of his mandate to "placate" New Delhi and instead delivered an

ultimatum. He reportedly told Gujral that if New Delhi did not meet a certain "deadline" then the "subcontinent would be set on fire." Yaqub's tough talk in New Delhi produced a contrary result. After an emergency meeting of his cabinet, V. P. Singh declared that India would "retaliate even if it meant war."[32] Press reports in Pakistan of Yaqub's visit gave some hint of this dialog, although these were generally submerged in the more extensive reporting of Yaqub's unprecedented national television address to the nation after the completion of his trip. This address was "clear, forceful, and unambiguous." It appealed to, and further exacerbated, the increasingly hawkish Pakistani mood on Kashmir.[33] The *Frontier Post* introduced the idea of war between India and Pakistan by quoting Yaqub as having told Gujral that even when wars are not intended they break out, and warned the Indians of "strong retaliation" if there should be any "mischief" along the Line of Control.[34] This may have been the first credible public discussion of a possible war between India and Pakistan at that time.

Gujral and V. P. Singh's perceptions of Yaqub's threatening words might explain an inquiry later made by Prime Minister Singh to the Indian air force authorities as to whether they could be certain about repulsing a "sneak nuclear attack" launched by Pakistan against India. Singh was informed that no such guarantee could ever be given since Pakistan could launch a successful attack if it had nuclear-capable aircraft and the attack was executed at low (treetop) level to evade radar. On the prime minister's further inquiry as to what India could do to prevent such an attack, he was informed that India would need to develop a nuclear deterrent.[35] Surprisingly, the army and navy were not queried in this regard by the prime minister. Also, there is no evidence that we are aware of, that India proceeded further and weaponized its nuclear capabilities at this stage.

V. P. Singh's statement thereafter that "India would have to review its peaceful nuclear policy if Pakistan employed its nuclear power for military purposes"[36] becomes significant in these circumstances. The context in which it was made remains unclear, but it can be surmised that this public warning was occasioned by a perception that Yaqub Khan's threat had a nuclear component which needed a visible, public response. V. P. Singh was bluntly asked in a subsequent interview whether he was apprehensive about nuclear weapons being used in the event of escalating India–Pakistan tensions. He replied: "We want to avoid conflict, but if it comes we have nothing to fear."[37] Further, if Pakistan were to go nuclear "we will have to take stock of the situation and act accordingly."[38] These ambiguous replies can, of course, be interpreted in many different ways.

The war of words escalates

Benazir Bhutto and other Pakistani leaders parried Indian charges of Pakistani complicity in the insurgency by declaring that the Kashmiri militancy was "indigenous and intrinsic." Unable any longer to resist pressure from conservative elements urging a more aggressive posture, she loudly proclaimed the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.[39] On March 13, as massive demonstrations continued against the crackdown of the security forces in Srinagar, Bhutto traveled to Muzzafarabad in Pakistan-held Kashmir, where she promised a "thousand-year war" in support of the militants and announced the creation of a $4 million fund to support the "freedom fighters" across the LOC.[40] Although the material effect of such support would be slight, it considerably raised the symbolic content of the conflict – and for many Indians, Pakistanis, and Kashmiris, the conflict became an intensely emotional issue.

The speech she gave made for gripping newspaper copy and sections were videotaped and widely distributed. "Jag-jag, mo-mo, han-han," she proclaimed, implying that she wanted to cut up the Indian governor in Kashmir like the syllables of his name.[41] The speech was broadcast on Pakistani television, which was available to Indian viewers, who also saw excerpts on the videocassette *Newstrack*, produced by the news magazine *India Today*. This appearance was especially inflammatory to informed Indian opinion, which had earlier regarded her election as a positive step forward towards the democratization of Pakistan, and a step away from the military junta that had ruled the country for ten years.[42]

Benazir Bhutto has told interlocutors that the speech was a forgery, blaming both the ISI and "the Indians,"[43] but there is no evidence in this regard. Senior Indian officials have since explained that they had put her English-language speeches at the time alongside her Urdu speeches, and noted that they were quite different: the latter were far more hawkish and threatening than the former. While she may have intended one message for a domestic audience, and the other for India, the Indians were deeply affronted by her Urdu speeches, which could be seen in their homes and offices. In response, her Indian counterpart, V. P. Singh, was to replicate her speech, although in a somewhat more moderate tone, in his address to the Lok Sabha a few weeks later.

As one would expect, the threat of a "thousand-year war" struck New Delhi like a thunderbolt. V. P. Singh quickly responded that India would react decisively against Pakistani intervention in Kashmir: "I do not wish to sound hawkish," he told the Indian Parliament, "but there should be no confusion. Such a misadventure would not be without cost."[44] At

about the same time, the BJP's national executive committee passed a resolution urging the Indian government to "knock out the training camps and transit routes of the terrorists." This stance was supported by the party's contention that: "Pakistan's many provocations amount to so many acts of war today. It is literally carrying on a war against India on Indian territory." The BJP further argued that the doctrine of "hot pursuit is a recognized defensive measure."[45] It made matters worse for the Singh government that the BJP was providing it with crucial parliamentary support. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi added to the clamor by urging the government to take "some very strong steps on Kashmir." He added, obliquely, perhaps with reference to India's secret nuclear weapons program, "I know what steps are possible. I also know what is in the pipeline and what the capabilities are. The question is, does the government have the guts to take strong steps?"[46]

Over the next week, V. P. Singh made a series of forthright public statements intended both to deter Islamabad and to neutralize his opposition within India. On April 10, in a Lok Sabha speech, the prime minister exhorted Indians to be "psychologically prepared" for war. Addressing Islamabad, he said: "Our message to Pakistan is that you cannot get away with taking Kashmir without a war." Responding to Bhutto's "thousand-year war" threat, he declared: "I warn them that those who talk about 1,000 years of war should examine whether they will last 1,000 hours of war." The prime minister claimed that Islamabad had moved its radar systems up to the border, made operational its forward air bases, and mined the frontier with India. Pakistan's strategy, he charged, was to avoid direct confrontation, while continuing to destabilize India by fanning the flames of violence in Kashmir. If this were successful, a limited Pakistani intervention might follow, to consolidate whatever gains the insurgents had made. Operation Topac was widely cited in the Indian press and government circles as evidence of a Pakistani strategy, even though it was widely known to be an Indian fabrication.[47] According to informed Pakistani military sources, Zia never developed a full blown operation of this sort, "even though he might have had some vague ideas about this kind of operation."[48] Finally, as if to dispel any notion that Pakistan's nuclear weapon capabilities would give Islamabad a deterrent umbrella under which to carry out offensive operations against India, Singh said that if Pakistan deployed nuclear weapons, "India will have to take a second look at our policy. I think we will have no option but to match. Our scientists have the capability to match it."[49]

Thus, a simple, if shocking, kidnapping in December led precipitately in four months to two weak minority governments frantically trying to

manage an increasingly militant public opinion, egged on by opposition groups who regarded them as soft, and to the exchange of public threats of a "thousand-year" war. Behind this development, which had begun to alarm various foreign states, there were other political games being played within each government: intelligence services "on the loose," especially in Pakistan, foreign affairs and defense bureaucracies which did not have much confidence in the quality of leadership provided by their respective prime ministers. Before turning to that threat, we must now track the crisis as it slowly became a conventional military confrontation.

Pakistan responds

V. P. Singh's April 10 statement exhorting Indians to be psychologically prepared for war revived memories of the Brasstacks episode three years earlier and was interpreted by the senior Pakistani military leadership as warning that a shooting war over Kashmir was possible. Pakistan's leading English-language daily called the Indian prime minister's warning "one of the most serious ever hurled at this country in recent years."[150] As read in Islamabad, V. P. Singh's speech fell just short of a declaration of war, and was based upon false or mischievous interpretations of events on the ground: for example, his claims regarding the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) preparatory maneuvers were denied by Pakistan military sources and were not supported by American observers then in Pakistan.[51]

The first major response to V. P. Singh's statement itself came from Aslam Beg, the Pakistani army chief, who on April 11, convened a meeting of his corps commanders to carry out a "detailed threat assessment." Beg told his subordinates that India, in an act of intimidation, had deployed a strike force of up to one hundred thousand men within fifty miles of the border, between Bikaner and Suratgarh in Rajasthan. He was referring to the Indian army units that were on winter exercises in the Mahajan area, which Pakistani officials now claimed had been extended. Pakistan army sources believed that the Indian force comprised several infantry divisions, one armored division, and three or four armored brigades. They estimated that the Indian units were deployed in such a way as to "halve India's normal mobilization time to one week." In addition, Islamabad noted that India continued to move large numbers of paramilitary forces into Kashmir. One reporter wrote:

> The concern in Islamabad is that India might be preparing an attack on Pakistani Kashmir on the pretext of destroying Kashmiri "freedom fighter" training camps. There is also concern that a

> simultaneous attack might be launched into Sindh province, where the only road and rail link between north and south Pakistan is located about forty kilometers from the Indian border.

On April 14, a senior Pakistani official told a parliamentary committee that the country's military forces were in a "high state of preparedness and vigilance to meet any external threat." He continued: "If, out of sheer frustration, India dragged Pakistan into military confrontation, it would find that Pakistan has the full capability of meeting the Indian invasion by mobilizing all its national resources."[52]

According to the Indian Chief of the Army Staff, General V. N. Sharma, the Indian troops had remained in their peacetime stations or cantonment locations. The two Indian strike corps also remained at their normal locations in Ambala and Jhansi; any move to shift them to the border would have entailed extensive disruption of the Indian railway system.[53] But the deteriorating situation in Punjab and Kashmir necessitated the movement of reinforcements into these states. Only the 8th (Mountain) Division was moved into Kashmir, but without its divisional artillery and heavy vehicles. For its part, the Indian Air Force (IAF) made changes in its radar positions and the dispositions of its Mobile Observation Units. The prime minister also permitted the IAF to take preventive measures by speeding up its defensive operations and activating its forward bases. In many ways, these steps, taken in conjunction with the April 10 speech by V. P. Singh, raised the tension levels to crisis proportions.[54]

Tottering governments

Meanwhile, in New Delhi, Singh's problems were multiplying. Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal brought his revolt out into the open in March. The contradictions within the Janata government, and Rajiv Gandhi's still significant opposition party, looked as if they would precipitate a mid-term election. These crises occurred quite apart from Kashmir, Punjab, and the India–Pakistan rivalry. Soon after the 1990 crisis an embattled Singh decided to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations, which called for extensive educational and public service reservations for Backward Classes; this produced violent protests and a number of immolations by young Indians of both sexes belonging to the higher castes that would be affected. His government fell shortly thereafter, following the withdrawal of support by the BJP.

Benazir Bhutto's own government was also in crisis. Following the general elections in autumn 1988, she had only 92 members of her Pakistan People's Party in a House of 215, but needed to share executive

authority, formally, with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and, informally, with the Chief of the Army Staff, Mirza Aslam Beg. The Eighth Amendment allowed Pakistan's president to dismiss an elected government at his (or her) pleasure. Further, on crucial matters of national security and the nuclear program she was a junior partner, and not fully informed about the latter. It might be added here that Ghulam Ishaq Khan had been associated with Pakistan's nuclear program since its inception, and that Benazir Bhutto was involved in the 1990 decision to recommence the uranium enrichment program after it had been suspended in 1989.

India's many insurgencies were also mirrored in Pakistan. A "virtual civil war" occurred in Sindh between Benazir Bhutto's PPP and the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM).[55] Besides, there were over three million Afghan refugees, 200,000 of them armed, but splintered into a half-dozen groups. Bhutto was caught in an intensely competitive political environment with Punjab's Chief Minister Nawaz Sharif and other opposition politicians looking for the chance to topple her. They were encouraged by elements in Pakistan's intelligence community, who were later to help rig the election that brought Nawaz Sharif to power. When Kashmir imploded, Bhutto was unable to use this event politically either against India or her domestic opposition.

It could be asserted, in retrospect, that the preoccupation of the Indian government with its survival eroded its capacity to undertake the patient diplomacy needed to address long-existing problems like Kashmir or India–Pakistan relations. Indeed, the Janata government was unable to support Foreign Minister Gujral, who was committed to distance himself from the adventurist foreign policies of the Rajiv Gandhi era, and work for improving India's relations with its estranged neighbors. The tendency in the Janata government was to let matters drift until they came to a head – at which point it would take the minimal action necessary to prevent the situation from going out of control. This overview of the confusion within the political system during the last half of 1989 and first half of 1990 might explain the government's inattention toward these major crises as they evolved.

The 1990 crisis developed not by design, but through inadvertence. It was occasioned by the unhappy coincidence that both India and Pakistan were headed by minority governments that had inherited difficult problems. They were now under unrelenting pressure from their predecessors, now in opposition, to find a quick solution to problems that had taken years to incubate and develop.

The military crisis

By early April, conventional military preparations were under way on both sides of the border. Why this happened will be discussed below. Let us first reconstruct the strategic and tactical perceptions and the actual movements of the military on both sides. For purposes of clarity, these activities can be grouped into three regions: Kashmir, Punjab, and the Rajasthan–Sindh border.

Early in August 1989, the Indian government began to be concerned with the insurgency situation in Kashmir and Punjab. It decided to augment its security forces, primarily with para-military forces, and later with infantry from the Indian army after December 1989, following the Rubaiya Sayeed kidnapping incident; but only the 8th Division was inducted. The army's chief concern, according to then Army Chief General V. N. Sharma, was to stem the infiltration by Pakistan-backed Sikh and Kashmiri terrorists into India, which threatened to overwhelm the local police forces, endangering India's larger plans for mobilization and war. Thus, very early on the insurgency was regarded as a factor in India's larger war-fighting plans.

Sharma believed that the infiltrators in the Punjab were backed by Pakistani intelligence agencies and were specifically sent to attack vital installations in order to disrupt Indian military movements.[56] As he told an interviewer in 1993:

> Terrorist groups backed by agencies in Pakistan were able to attack railway stations and vital installations, which could affect any military movement on our side. . . . Therefore, there was need for the Indian army to go in there to take care of the communication lines and other bottlenecks so that if there was a military flare-up, we could conveniently move our fighting forces from locations deep in the country to the border areas.[57]

Across the border different judgments were being made. A very senior Pakistani military official contested Sharma's explanation for dispatching the troops, arguing that while some volunteers may have participated in the jihad, Sharma had misrepresented the facts by branding them as government-sponsored infiltrators.[58]

According to Sharma, tank units of Pakistan's II Corps (also designated Army Reserve South) had moved into the desert region of Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar across the border from the Indian states of Punjab and Rajasthan. In addition, he claimed that parts of Pakistan's I Corps (designated Army Reserve North) had moved into the Shakargarh bulge,

just across the border from the vital road linking Jammu to Punjab. Sharma maintains that a tank division was also included in these forces. Indian military planners were also concerned with residual deployments of Pakistan army forces after the integrated land–air exercise called Zarb-i-Momin (Arabic for "Sword of the Believer"). General Sharma also claimed that troops involved in this exercise, the largest integrated land–air exercise in Pakistan's history, did not go back to their peacetime stations and had stayed back in the exercise area, which is within striking distance of the international border and ceasefire line, but primarily to extend support to the infiltrators.[59] More specifically, he held that Pakistan's Army Reserve North remained in its exercise location within the Indus–Jhelum *doab* (the area between two rivers). Army Reserve Force South went back to its peacetime station, but it did not need to cross the Sutlej River, because it could reach its offensive positions within forty-eight hours in pursuance of Pakistan's stated military policy of "offensive defence." The most senior Pakistani military officials contradict Sharma's claims and have stressed that the troops involved in Zarb-i-Momin went back to their peacetime stations within five weeks after the exercise was over. Sharma disagrees.

Zarb-i-Momin and Brasstacks

Zarb-i-Momin was the largest military exercise in Pakistan's history. It began on December 9, 1989, in Pakistani Punjab and involved some two hundred thousand soldiers. According to General Beg, it tested a new Pakistani ground strategy:

> In the past we were pursuing a defensive policy; now there is a big change since we are shifting to a policy of offensive defense. Should there be a war, the Pakistan army plans to take the war into India, launching a sizeable offensive on Indian territory.[60]

Zarb emulated many aspects of the Brasstacks exercise developed in 1986–7 by India's General K. Sundarji.[61] One senior Pakistani officer observed that Beg had visions of himself as a great general and wanted to do something on a large and grand scale. Brasstacks had been spectacular. Seymour Hersh described it as even more dangerous than the 1990 crisis. It institutionalized memories in both the Indian and Pakistani militaries regarding the dangers inherent in large-scale armor exercises being held near the India–Pakistan border. This reduced the time required for both countries, but especially India, to move its forces up to the border by several weeks because its cantonments were more

distant from the border. The Brasstacks exercise made a particularly deep impression on the Pakistanis, and almost led to a war.[62]

Zarb-i-Momin involved four army corps, seven infantry divisions, one armored division, three independent infantry and armor brigades, a squadron of the army's *Cobra* attack helicopters, air defense units, and several air squadrons; it was clearly designed to demonstrate Pakistan's conventional military prowess and send a firm dissuasive message to Indian military planners.[63] Further, a contemporaneous Pakistan air force exercise ("Highmark") was merged with Zarb to create a realistic air-threat environment.[64] This involved the PAF generating a large number (some say thousands) of sorties with combat and transport aircraft and the live firing of missiles, rockets, and bombs. The purpose was to allow pilots to test their wartime ordnance; ground crews to ensure peak serviceability of equipment; radar units to provide timely warning of enemy aircraft; and ground controllers to guide pilots onto their targets.[65]

Authoritative Pakistani sources confirm that Zarb contained an element of bravura and showmanship, but state that the actual deployments after the exercise were quite restrained, and that General Sharma's interpretation of the flow of events was exaggerated. Pakistan did not move its reserve corps in Quetta (12th Corps); only a few elements of the 11th Corps based in Peshawar had taken part in Zarb. Defensively deployed corps were facing India; the 30th Corps (between the Chenab and Ravi), 31st Corps (between the Ravi and the Sutlej), and 5th Corps (defending Sind and Karachi) remained in place. Zarb did involve movement of elements of the northern and southern Strike Forces, but not on a scale that would threaten India.

The Indian perception of Zarb-i-Momin and subsequent Pakistani military deployments was that it took place because the Pakistan army under General Aslam Beg wanted to prove that they could also stage a tactical training exercise on the same scale as Brasstacks. It was notable that the terrain picked for the exercise was very similar to the terrain in north Punjab and portions of Jammu in India. Even the movements planned for the attacking force and the defending forces replicated the likely scene of a Pakistani attack in northern Indian Punjab, and how Pakistani forces would move to defeat the Indian forces there. The Pakistani strategists must have envisioned a pre-emptive attack on north Punjab making it difficult for the Indian army to bring in supporting units. India was definitely worried.[66]

The assessment made by the Indian armed forces was that, apart from emulating the Brasstacks exercise, Zarb-i-Momin might have had other purposes in mind. This interpretation seemed to be vindicated when

Pakistan's troops remained in their field positions after the exercise concluded, and did not return to their peacetime stations.[67] It was further believed that Pakistan might have come to believe that the time was propitious for an "adventure," calculating that Kashmir had joined Punjab and other Indian regions that had become "hotspots." Consequently, the Indian police and paramilitary forces were tied up in tackling militants, and would not be available to protect the lines of communication or perform other second-line-of-defense duties. Militants were also active in Nagaland and Manipur and the IPKF was stuck in Sri Lanka until the end of March 1990. With a weak and minority government in power, Indian analysts thought that Pakistan might have concluded that India was "strategically unbalanced."[68] One of India's leading strategic writers, misquoting one of the authors, concludes that there was a prospect, at this time, of a Pakistani "sneak attack."[69]

India's civilian bureaucratic assessment was even more alarming:

> We got definite information that Pakistan was planning to make a pre-emptive attack in northern Punjab as soon as the monsoon broke (May–June), which would make movement on the Indian side difficult. The Pakistani terrorists would then declare (in Srinagar, on August 14) their secession from India and invite Pakistan to send its army to protect them. Pakistan thought that this would be enough grounds for them to officially and legally enter Kashmir . . . A sizeable part of the Pakistan army would also be deployed against our Punjab border in the south, apparently to tie us down there.[70]

Like a set of mirrors facing each other, it is clear that Indian perceptions of Pakistan's misperceptions informed Delhi's own assessment of the Zarb-i-Momin exercise, and the crisis that followed. Even though there were reports that Pakistan privately informed India of the scope and scale of these maneuvers, worst-case interpretations predominated.[71] For example, according to General Sharma, the Indians determined that after the exercises were completed, "these troops were not going back to their peace stations, but they were staying on in the exercise area, which is quite close to the international border and the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir." His assessment of these military movements "was that Pakistan was keeping troops ready as back-up support to the growing terrorist activities in Indian territory across the border and could take full advantage of terrorist successes to support military intervention."[72] Further, the exercise was held within the

Indus–Jhelum *doab*, where the rivers run in a north–south direction; this could enable an attack upon Indian-administered Kashmir during the monsoons when these rivers would be in spate and an Indian offensive across them would become very difficult.

Thus to Indian analysts, Zarb-i-Momin, like Brasstacks, placed battle-ready troops within striking distance of the border. The need for counter-measures suggested itself to the Indian military, as it did to Pakistan during the Brasstacks exercise, lest Zarb become the "real thing." The reversal of roles in 1990, compared to 1986–7 needs no emphasis.

Zarb-i-Momin and Brasstacks had something else in common. Both were linked to critical ethnic conflicts on either side of the India–Pakistan border, although in different ways. Brasstacks occurred at a time when Pakistan's Sind province was getting alienated from the Punjabi-dominated regime of President Zia – and the exercise was clearly directed at Sind. Pakistan's riposte to Brasstacks was to move its forces towards India's Punjab, which at that time was in equal disarray because of the alienation of the Sikhs from the Indian government. The military feints by India and Pakistan had, as a critical subtext, the possibility of deriving local support from disaffected ethnic or separatist groups across the border.

Zarb-i-Momin has often been associated with the destabilization of Kashmir, but the two events were not directly related. If war had broken out at the time of this Pakistani exercise, Pakistan's forces may not have got into the Valley, but could have interdicted the Pathankot–Jammu road to further its objective of fueling the Kashmiri insurgency. India's Sikhs remained as alienated as they were in 1986–7; indeed, a division minus force had to be deployed in the Punjab also to handle the situation in that state. So, to the degree that military conflict in South Asia has been linked with the opportunity to detach a significant ethnic group, like the East Bengalis from Pakistan or Kashmiris from India, the 1990 crisis was in character. Obviously, neither Kashmir nor Punjab could have been wrested easily from New Delhi by conventional military means without a large-scale war. Even officers in the regular Pakistan army were wary of direct military support for the Kashmiris, as they were not eager "to lose Pakistan for the sake of the Kashmiris." Some cited classical Maoist guerrilla war theory: a guerrilla movement had to succeed on its own, outside assistance might have a marginal influence, but could never be decisive.[73]

Not surprisingly, Pakistani perceptions were similarly informed by deep suspicions. They viewed India's "precautionary movements" skeptically. These counter-moves included the shifting of an estimated

one division into Jammu and Kashmir and one division minus into Punjab. "And this was done over a number of weeks so that no trains and other civil transportation got disrupted. It was not an alarmist movement."[74] The purpose of these re-deployments was partly to strengthen the counter-insurgency units in Kashmir and Punjab, but also to beef up the conventional defensive posture against Pakistan. Some Indians believe that the quiet manner in which these movements were effected might have conveyed the impression to Pakistan that far larger forces had, in fact, been deployed, which would permit India to launch an offensive against Pakistan. As for the Pakistani estimate of what was actually happening in Kashmir, the chief Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI, initially believed that the guerillas might be successful in Kashmir, but later scaled down their goal to merely "bleeding" India.

Mahajan

In February 1990, the Indian army sent two new tank units for training at its field firing range at Mahajan near Bikaner in Rajasthan; a great deal was read by Pakistan into this deployment. With Brasstacks fresh in their minds, Pakistani planners had to decide whether the Indian armored units at Mahajan were "ginning up another large exercise of that nature, or, preparing to launch an attack from the training range."[75] In addition, the deployment period was believed to have been extended beyond the usual training cycle and linked to Prime Minister Singh's April 1990 speech in Parliament urging the country to be psychologically prepared for war.

At a conference of corps commanders in Rawalpindi in April 1990, General Aslam Beg said that India had deployed a strike force of some one hundred thousand men within fifty miles of the border in Rajasthan.[76] According to the *Washington Post*, Beg put his troops on alert in response to India's move to assemble an armored strike force in the Rajasthan desert.[77] Beg, however, did not consider the presence of one hundred thousand soldiers threatening enough to warrant strong reactive moves, but he did stress that the presence of one thousand tanks would indeed have constituted a major threat.[78] In India the feeling was that Pakistan was overreacting. It was clarified that, "we just had two newly equipped tank units there [Mahajan ranges] as they had to be trained in tank firing. They had been sent for this [training] in Feb.–Mar. 1990."[79]

Nevertheless, India did appear to have beefed up its military presence both in Kashmir as well as in Punjab. Its armor units, however, were on the *eastern* side of the Indira Gandhi Canal. Bridging equipment would have been needed for launching an armored thrust across the canal into

Pakistan apart from building up large ammunition supplies. In fact all tank units were withdrawn in April, when it became too hot for armor to be deployed in the desert region of Rajasthan.

For India's part, the belief was that the Pakistan reserve forces had not returned to their peacetime locations but were deployed in locations near the Shakargarh bulge and the Bahawalpur–Bhawalnagar areas. From there they could strike across the international border, constituting a potential threat. The precise movement and deployment of their respective armor became a critical issue for assessing the Indian–Pakistan military crisis in 1990.

The two air forces were definitely on high alert. India "permitted the air force to go on high alert in the border areas and especially in Rajasthan, as the opposite air bases in Pakistan had gone on high alert. Accordingly, radar activities were upgraded."[80] However, the American military attaché in Pakistan made reconnaissance trips and confirmed that neither the forward operating bases for the Indian air force were opened up nor were the strike corps moved out of their usual stations.[81] The Pakistanis, still obviously alarmed, decided to talk to the Indians on the hot line. When it was explained to them that this was part of India's annual armor training exercise, according to a very senior Pakistani military official, the alarm bells stopped ringing.[82]

In discussions with U.S. Embassy personnel, Indian officials confirmed that New Delhi was putting more men, material, and arms into Kashmir, but denied the existence of any special military preparations in other sectors. New Delhi claimed that these reinforcements were a response to Pakistan's own build-up on its side of the LOC. Reuters reported diplomats in New Delhi as saying that "forces on both sides of the border were on a higher than normal state of alert, but several levels lower than would indicate imminent hostilities."[83] Indian officials also denied Beg's assertion regarding the formation of an Indian strike force in Rajasthan, claiming that their units had withdrawn to their "normal positions" after the winter exercise.[84] Western military analysts reported no major troop mobilization near the international frontier, but speculated that by extending their exercises, Indian military planners may have pre-positioned their tanks and heavy artillery near the border. In the words of one analyst, "everything the Indians have been doing fits under the category of defensive preparedness, but some of it is ambiguous."[85] None of its strike units, however, were moved closer to the border.

On April 14, V. P. Singh, in discussions with the press, elaborated on the logic of these preparations. He told them that Pakistan was preparing to launch an attack across India's western border where, he

asserted, Pakistan had deployed new armored regiments and sophisticated radar. Singh added that Pakistan's army and air force were on "red alert" along the ceasefire line that divides Kashmir, and that Pakistani artillery had been moved to forward positions across from Kashmir and Punjab.[86] He explained that: "In my perception, Pakistan's strategy is to avoid armed conflict, yet continue to fan insurgency within India. Their strategy is to achieve the territorial goals without the price of war."[87] The prime minister also said his intention was to avert war: "Many wars have been prevented by a timely warning. It is indecision and confused signals that have usually triggered a conflict."[88]

Claiming that political jockeying among Pakistan's ruling troika made it difficult to know exactly who was in charge across the border, the prime minister also observed that, "Had anyone been in control, it would not have been necessary for me to issue a public warning."[89] Still, sentiment was growing among influential Indians for strikes against Pakistan. Home Minister Sayeed, for example, argued that war with Pakistan "would be fully justified if the objective of freeing Kashmir from the stranglehold of the secessionists was achieved."[90] The BJP leader, L. K. Advani, took an even stronger line, warning that Pakistan would "cease to exist" if it attacked India.[91]

Military movements

Pakistanis involved in these events dismissed V. P. Singh's statement of April 14 as rhetorical. One very senior Pakistani military official termed his allegations as incorrect.[92] He thought that the Indian PM was either unable to gauge who was in control within the Pakistani troika or was responding to incessant BJP pressures for initiating strikes against the alleged militant's training camps in Azad Kashmir. It was understandable that the armed forces would be asked to be vigilant in a crisis situation, but ordering a "red alert" implied preparations for war. He asserted that *the Pakistanis had ordered no red alert* and both director generals of military operations (DGMOs) were regularly in touch with each other on the hot lines.[93]

One noted Indian strategist took a sanguine view of the prospects for war. In an *India Today* interview, India's former COAS, General K. Sundarji, suggested that the likelihood of war was low due to the influence of nuclear deterrence on Indian and Pakistani leaders. In the first public discussion of the role of nuclear weapons in the crisis, Sundarji asserted that "any sensible planner sitting on this side of the border is going to assume Pakistan does indeed have nuclear weapons capability. And, by the same token, I rather suspect the view from the

other side is going to look very similar." Sundarji acknowledged that "on the other side, there may be the odd person who has kidded himself into believing that they have the nuclear weapon capability and we do not" but called this view "stupid. The sooner they wake up to this reality, the better."[94] As we note in Chapter 6, although the risks of nuclear confrontation were distinctly low, the damage potential of a nuclear conflict in the subcontinental setting was unconscionably high.

How was the movement of the Pakistani armor strike forces assessed by India? The Indian army and Indian intelligence agencies held different opinions. The former believed that the two strike corps had moved into the Bahawalpur and Bhawalnagar sectors. The intelligence agencies were certain that the strike corps had *not* moved from their peacetime locations on the basis of information received from "impeccable sources." India's intelligence agencies appreciated the army's concern about Pakistani intentions, and the precautionary deployments made. But they determined that Pakistan's repositioning of its forces were actually counter-moves in reaction to the Indian ground movements.[95] These divergent views were brought to the notice of the prime minister's office, which decided to err on the side of caution, and take the Pakistani threat seriously.[96]

The deployment of forces on the Indian side can now be discussed. In addition to the six divisions normally posted in Kashmir, one more (8th Mountain Division) had been moved in. These seven divisions were supplemented by an estimated ten thousand men from the paramilitary forces. Similarly, one under-strength division had joined the four divisions positioned in the Punjab. What forces India had deployed in the Rajasthan sector is a matter of some controversy. Apart from the tank units exercising and being periodically rotated through the Mahajan ranges, the Southern Command's forces were available. One infantry division and one armored brigade from this command were in their peacetime locations, and they should not have added to Pakistan's concerns.

By mid-April 1990, the disposition of military forces near the India–Pakistan border and the LOC in Kashmir was as follows: in Kashmir, India had stationed up to two hundred thousand troops, drawn from both the army and paramilitary forces. These soldiers supplemented some seventeen thousand local Jammu and Kashmir police. The security forces often clashed with the local police, whose loyalties they suspected. Pakistan had a force of some one hundred thousand soldiers in Kashmir. The Indian and Pakistani forces were reported to be in "eyeball-to-eyeball" confrontation across the LOC; in some cases as close as two hundred meters apart. The United Nations

Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan also reported a quadrupling of border violations in the January–March period of 1990 compared to this period in 1989.[97]

In Punjab, the Indian and Pakistani infantry were reported to be in their front-line bunkers, but the bulk of both sides' armor and artillery were held back in their cantonments. Opposite the Lahore sector, the Indians had moved two infantry divisions toward the border. They were spread out into "penny packets" – small unit formations – across a one hundred and twenty kilometer front, lending credence to the Indian claim that these forces in Punjab had a defensive and counter-infiltration mission. Even Pakistan's corps commander in the vital Lahore area expressed relative unconcern about India's forward movements.[98]

Complicating military planning along the Punjab border however was a 375-mile "wall" erected by India along the border in response to the Punjab insurgency, stretching from the Chenab River north of Jammu city in Kashmir to Fort Abbas, across from the Indian state of Rajasthan. The wall consisted of two formidable, floodlit twelve-foot high fences of barbed wire, set about twenty feet apart. Electrified wire was intermingled with barbed wire, and the space between the fences was filled with concertina wire. Powerful searchlights, watchtowers, and machine-gun nests lined the wall at intervals of 100–200 yards. According to Lt Gen. Alam Jan Mahsud, commander of the Pakistan army's IV Corps, the Indians had sealed the Punjab border so tightly that "not even a rabbit can slip through it."[99] In Rajasthan, across from the southern Punjab province in Pakistan there was a three-division Indian force, including one armored division. An infantry division backed this force and an armored brigade was located in its peacetime station at Jodhpur. Another infantry division was stationed in the Ramgarh–Barmer area across from Pakistan's Sindh province. A Pakistani corps based in Multan, whose armored division was in its cantonment, opposed these forces.[100]

In all three regions, only *one* of the five armored divisions fielded by the two countries (three Indian and two Pakistani) was in an unusual position.[101] This was the Indian division whose units were being exercised in rotation at Mahajan after the February exercises. The other Indian armored division remained in its cantonment in Ambala, as did the Pakistani divisions in Multan and Kharian. None of the five divisions was moving, intact, toward the frontier. At that time, diplomats in New Delhi and Islamabad said they had detected "no troop movements that could be construed as anything more than logical precautions given the war of words between the two capitals."[102] As the Stimson Center's account of the crisis concludes, "the Indian military leadership deliberately

refrained from moving armor associated with its strike forces out of peacetime cantonments," and Pakistan "deliberately refrained from moving its two strike corps to the front."[103] At this time, the Indian defense secretary, Naresh Chandra, visited Pakistan and conveyed the explicit message that "we are not moving."

Two parameters assume great significance in any estimate of the danger of conflict when India–Pakistan forces face each other in a state of high alert. First, the position of their armor. This requires a short explanation. The use of armor was difficult in the Punjab, because the region was heavily fortified and defended on both sides of the border. Both countries were vulnerable to armored attack in the Rajasthan–Sindh sector where the desert-like terrain and prolonged dry season made campaigning easier. India also felt especially vulnerable in the Chhamb sector, which was the staging point from which Operation Grand Slam had been launched in 1965. After its loss of territory in the Chhamb area west of the Munnawar Tawi River following the 1971 India–Pakistan war, military geography favored Pakistan in this sector. It could make an armored thrust easier for Pakistan to interdict the Jammu–Poonch line of communications in the Akhnur area.

Second, the state of readiness of the air forces was also indicative of heightened tension. This, too, requires a short explanation. A pre-emptive strike to initiate hostilities or the launching of a massive air strike during the initial few hours of the conflict was deemed vital by the Indian air force for both defensive and offensive purposes. Command of the air was obviously essential to render the adversary's armor units vulnerable to air attack. This would require the destruction of the adversary's aircraft on the ground. Because it was unlikely that Pakistan would leave their aircraft outside of defensive works like revetments (concrete blast-resistant pens), especially when tensions were growing over a period of time, the airfields would have to be incapacitated. This required a runway-denial attack to render the airfields inoperable and secure at least a temporary command of the air. This would then allow armor units to attack without the additional jeopardy of being subjected to aerial attacks.[104]

While political passions can be quickly generated in India and Pakistan, it is far more difficult to create a military situation that gives one or the other side a temporary military advantage. While Kashmir was in a state of crisis and the two weak minority governments in office were being pushed to adopt more extreme measures by hawks inside and outside their cabinets, it would not have been easy for one or the other side to achieve tactical, let alone strategic, dominance on the ground. Both sides believed they had good intelligence about the location,

strength, and readiness of their opposing armor forces. And, for reassurance, the United States had agreed to "verify" the non-movement of ground forces on both sides. To the extent 1990 was a military crisis, it was not one that would have involved the ground forces, at least in its initial phases. But the defensive actions by the two air forces fuelled mutual suspicions and this added to the sense of growing crisis. Indeed, the 1971 war in the western sector had begun in this fashion with multiple PAF strikes on Indian airfields.

Outside involvement

Fairly early in the crisis, Washington was informed by Pakistan of its concern regarding Indian forces in Mahajan. A number of explanations are possible for Pakistani action. It is possible this request was tongue-in-cheek since Islamabad had a realistic assessment of the limited capabilities of the Mahajan units, apart from knowledge of India's cautious movements elsewhere. Or it could be that Pakistan, uncertain of its own intelligence capabilities, wanted to verify the assurances given by various Indian emissaries about the Mahajan units. Finally, there could have been a strategic objective; as in the past, during crises and non-crises such as the putative scares of 1983 and 1984, Pakistan may again have wanted to bring the United States into the region simply to put additional pressure on the larger India.

U.S. officials relayed Pakistan's concerns about movement at the Mahajan firing range to the Indian Ministry of Defense, whose representatives explained their version of the deployments. India then decided to take the U.S. ambassador in New Delhi into confidence and requested that his staff verify that India had not deployed its armor. The military attachés in the American Embassy were detailed for this task. They were asked to specify some fifteen to twenty locations and count the "tanks in garages" and field units with tanks. Instructions were issued to all formations that they should provide full access to the attachés at whichever locations they wanted to inspect.[105]

This invitation might have been extended because of the belief in India that the India–Pakistan border was under surveillance by an American satellite in any case. India could, therefore, have decided to make a virtue out of necessity, occasioned by the conviction that an American satellite "was actually monitoring the movement along the border" anyway, and that India had nothing to hide, and everything to gain by full disclosure.[106]

From this point onwards both India and Pakistan worked with the respective U.S. embassies on verifying the actual state of military deployments. (We will examine the Gates mission in the next chapter).

The attaché tours were undertaken in February 1990, and on several occasions thereafter. They did not observe any unusual military activity during these tours, apart from "substantial rotations of armored and mechanized units into the training area. Now, that's different from deployment . . ."[107] It is arguable that the Indian armor in their peacetime locations of Ambala and Jhansi were near enough to the India–Pakistan border to have been moved up easily. However, this would be an erroneous belief because any major movement of strike or armored forces from these locations would have necessitated an extensive use of rolling stock and disrupted rail communications all over the country. This had raised problems even during the Brasstacks exercises, when the rail ministry's protests about the strain on India's rail network brought about a reduction in the scale of the exercise.

The American attachés in New Delhi eventually concluded that the Mahajan training activity was normal for that time of year; the units had moved there in February when the cool weather makes it comfortable to conduct training maneuvers in the desert. The attachés also agreed with Sharma's assessment given to Ambassador Clark that the Indian army could not launch an effective offensive against Pakistan from Mahajan because extensive bridging equipment was required for armor to cross the barrier provided by the Indira Gandhi Canal.[108]

According to the U.S. air attaché in New Delhi, Colonel John Sandrock, the only thing "unusual from our perspective was the deployment of additional troops in Kashmir as a result of the reported cross-border infiltration from Pakistan into Kashmir and then along the border, south through the rest of Jammu and Kashmir and into the [Indian state of] Punjab." These consisted of both regular Indian army forces and troops from the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF). The BSF had the "primary responsibility for border security," while the army's role was to "act as a back-up" in the event of "real hostilities." According to Sandrock, there was no evidence that the army's activities included the movement of tanks and artillery. This corroborated the Indian claim that the "buildup of forces on the border was to prevent cross-border infiltration and did not constitute a buildup of forces preparing for any hostile action against Pakistan."[109]

At the same time that the American attachés were observing Indian forces, their counterparts in Pakistan undertook a similar series of fact-finding missions on their side of the border. They, also, found little unusual military activity. Of special importance, one of the attachés noted, was that the two Pakistani strike corps were not on the move and that the Pakistani air force's forward operating bases were not opened. They were, however, in a high state of alert.

The Indian judgment was that the United States was anxious to resolve this crisis because another regional crisis was brewing in the Gulf region that was demanding attention. The Indians were therefore surprised when the United States renewed its interest in the situation in April, dispatching – at short notice – a high-level team to both Islamabad and New Delhi. Indeed, the respective U.S. ambassadors, William Clark and Robert Oakley, have also professed surprise, since their respective attachés had been monitoring what was thought to be a quiet and stable military situation. The next chapter will return to the American role in the crisis and explain the origins of the Gates mission, which was sent to the two countries in May.

As for other countries, most were counseling restraint to both sides. Beijing's major concern was that instability in Kashmir could encourage Islamic militancy in its Xinjiang province.[110] The Soviet Union, too, played a role. Its influence was limited, especially in Pakistan; but it acted in concert with the United States urging both countries to lower tensions.[111] It seems, however, that some residual suspicion existed in Washington that Soviet restraint was occasioned by "Indian objections," and "they were shielding the Indian allies to some degree."[112]

The pressure increases

The public thumping of war drums continued throughout this period, and both governments came under pressure to build up their forces – India to adopt a tougher approach to the Pakistan-supported infiltrators in Kashmir, Pakistan to support the Kashmiri "freedom fighters" more actively from what was seen as brutal Indian suppression. The opposition was pressuring the Indian government to invoke the doctrine of hot pursuit and undertake air strikes to knock out the infiltrators' training camps and transit routes. Nevertheless, the hot lines between the two defense establishments continued to operate.[113]

Even though Pakistan was concerned with possible attacks on Azad Kashmir and Sindh by India, several senior Pakistani officers interviewed for this study claim that they had not, at the time, seen war as inevitable. One thought that, because the Indians had committed so many troops to cope with what the Pakistanis regarded as the legitimate, ongoing freedom struggle inside Kashmir, it would be extremely unwise for Delhi to contemplate a war with Pakistan.[114] In contrast to the Indians, Pakistani defense and military officials felt that a war with India would not only prove to be a disaster for both sides but would still not lead to a resolution of the Kashmir dispute.[115] According to a Reuter's report, the corps commander of Lahore viewed the increased Indian force

deployment as not offensive in nature. He was, however, quoted as asserting that it allowed India to shorten the time it would take to put its forces on a war footing by one or two weeks.[116] Another senior Pakistani officer, intimately involved with these events, claimed that Pakistan's goal was less to prevent an Indian military attack across the LOC or even across the international border itself, than to keep the Indians from clamping down too firmly on the Kashmiri freedom movement. This relaxed position adopted by Pakistan's military establishment was evident to one of the authors during a series of visits to various Pakistani military facilities at that time.

On April 19 the *Daily Telegraph* quoted briefings by Pakistani military commanders to the effect that India had stationed five army divisions along the LOC in Kashmir, two of which had moved out of their peacetime garrisons. One division and an armored brigade were also moved forward in the Ferozepur region on the northwest border of India and Pakistan between Indian Punjab and the Sutlej River. Two to three divisions in eastern India had been alerted to move west. In the Rajasthan sector India had a three-division force facing the Pakistani corps based in Multan. They had not moved out as they had during the Brasstacks crisis, but stayed in their cantonment.[117] A few days later the London *Times* reported that Pakistan had mobilized its Mujahid force (a paramilitary force) and another Indian division had moved out of its peacetime station.[118]

While much was being made of these military movements by the media, essential steps like the cancellation of leaves, disruption of train schedules, calling up reserves, moving the strike forces, making the forward air bases fully operational, and daily meetings of the defense committees were all missing from the scenario. On the contrary, the prevailing milieu appears to have been the avoidance of war. It was evident that neither side wanted a full-fledged conflict at this time. Undoubtedly the most visible activities attracting attention and generating apprehensions were either inside Kashmir or along the LOC. Both sides seemed to have moved towards a defensive posture. According to an Indian report, several senior Indian generals quite candidly admitted that many of their commanders were reacting to newspaper reports and only taking precautionary measures in congruence with their own assessment of the then prevalent situation and what was likely to happen.[119] Both sides were well aware of the many factors that impeded a drift toward war. Because the political bosses gave no clear directions, the incumbent ambiguities in the political statements allowed sufficient room for unnecessary saber rattling which, indeed, continued for quite some time.

First, both sides knew that the numerical superiority of the Indian army could not ensure a quick victory. American aid in the 1980s had redressed some of the serious deficiencies in Pakistan's capabilities. Pakistani officers assert that they had improved the army's capabilities to sustain and fight a war from eleven to forty days, and the 1989 Zarb-i-Momin exercise confirmed the enhanced fighting capacity of the Pakistan army. In addition, the defense production sector had also been improved with assistance from a number of European states as well as China and North Korea. Further, many Indian troops were just coming back from Sri Lanka, and a failed counter-insurgency operation. This had demoralized the Indian army and embittered the officer corps. Their wrath was evenly divided between the politicians like Rajiv Gandhi, who had ordered them into Sri Lanka, and generals like K. Sundarji, who had fecklessly assured the civilian leadership that the IPKF could easily disarm the LTTE.

Second, the situation in Punjab and Kashmir was alarming and could not be overlooked while formulating operational war plans. Both the Kashmiris and a sizable section of the Sikhs in Punjab had been alienated by the coercive policies of New Delhi. Similarly the situation in Pakistan's Sindh was sufficiently worrisome to warrant serious attention by Islamabad.

Third, another war would have had a disastrous impact on their two economies. Both states were, in fact, on the brink of fiscal crisis, and their economies would have found it difficult to absorb the punitive impact of war.

Diplomacy, or heightened crisis?

Throughout the crisis Indian and Pakistani diplomats and officials were in touch with each other. Despite the inflammatory speeches and changes in force deployment, the two sides never lost contact. India sent its defense secretary, Naresh Chandra, on a quiet mission to Islamabad. Chandra was an experienced and trusted civil servant. He reassured the Pakistanis that "we are not moving." The Indians also allowed the United States to verify the position of its armor and assumed, correctly, that the United States would reassure Pakistan on this count.

Later, on April 25, 1990, the respective foreign ministers, I. K. Gujral and Yaqub Khan, met in New York. There could not have been a greater contrast with their meetings in New Delhi four months earlier – meetings that for some Indians hinted at the prospect of a nuclear edge being added to the crisis. They quickly agreed to reduce tensions by employing the existing CBMs and keeping open all channels of communication,

especially those between senior military officers.[120] This meeting seemed to be a turning point in the crisis. It appears that both sides realized that if the war tempo was raised, then it was not unthinkable that a very minor event could escalate. Both had already fought three major wars and innumerable border clashes, there was sporadic fighting in Siachin, and a war scare of the first magnitude had occurred three years earlier. Yet, both sides used every opportunity to exploit the situation, each blaming the other for the crisis in Kashmir.

5 America's deepening engagement

In mid-May 1990 a high-level American mission (the "Gates mission") was sent to South Asia for talks with the Indian and Pakistani governments. This chapter examines the process that led to this diplomatic initiative, and discusses its impact on the resolution of the 1990 crisis.[1]

The U.S. government first expressed high level concern over the crisis in Kashmir in January 1990 when the undersecretary of state for political affairs, Robert Kimmett, made a trip to the region and discussed events in the Valley with interlocutors in New Delhi and Islamabad. In three months Washington's concerns had intensified with the Central Intelligence Agency sounding the alarm. Its analysts were unable to piece together the several pieces in the puzzle including the covert nuclear developments in Pakistan, the kaleidoscopic changes in both Indian and Pakistani politics, the termination of two major cross-border operations (the Pakistan-supported Mujahidin in Afghanistan, and the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka). They were now reading reports of troop movements and press references to nuclear threats. To some, it appeared to be a rerun of the 1987 Brasstacks crisis that had involved a minor failure of American intelligence. It was minor in the sense that the crisis was underestimated by American analysts and officials – no U.S. agency took seriously the prospect of war, and most did not understand the nature of Indian intentions. Fortunately this had no adverse consequences for the ultimate peaceful resolution of the Brasstacks crisis, but the effect was to make the CIA analysts especially careful and attentive about the events of 1990.

Elements of the U.S. intelligence community now warned of the growing political instability in the region, the further development of Pakistan's nuclear program, and the fragile nature or inoperability of the confidence-building measures earlier agreed upon by the two countries. Some predicted war, if not in May, when the heat would have made operations impractical, or in June or July, when the monsoon

would have made major roads and the desert impassable, but most likely "in the fall."

This assessment was not fully shared by the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. This, perhaps, explains why the two U.S. missions were not alarmed. On the basis of their own observation the embassies were fairly certain that war between India and Pakistan was highly unlikely and, in the absence of hard evidence to the contrary, they were not predicting a nuclear crisis. It must be reiterated that the ambiguous conversations between Yaqub Khan, Inder Gujral, and V. P. Singh, discussed in the previous chapter, were unknown to any of the Americans or (as far as we can determine) any other state.

The United States was further drawn into the crisis in early April when the Pakistan government asked it to verify whether India had not moved its forces into threatening positions. One American official terms these requests as "panic stricken," and concluded at the time that the Pakistanis were "very alarmed." The U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Robert Oakley, duly reported these Pakistani requests after he had been briefed in Army Headquarters in Rawalpindi. The United States had been approached by the Pakistan government on several earlier occasions for assistance in verifying Indian activities. In the early 1980s, there were reports of suspicious Indian aircraft movements, and Pakistan expressed its concern over possible Israeli and Soviet, as well as Indian, attacks on the enrichment facility at Kahuta. Some of these fears were communicated via the Pakistani press. These anxieties were expressed by Islamabad to Washington in the context of close U.S.–Pakistan military cooperation in Afghanistan. These requests had on several occasions energized the U.S. government, which tried to verify these Pakistani concerns.

After the request from Islamabad in early April there was a "what-if" meeting to discuss U.S. responses should a regional war break out. Early on in the crisis there was some low-level discussion in the Department of State about how Washington might play a more active role in settling the Kashmir dispute. This position was soon displaced by the "crisis prevention" approach that dominated American diplomacy during the months that led to the Gates mission.

The United States received tacit permission from India and Pakistan to confirm that neither side had deployed provocatively, approval being granted by each at the highest political level. If the United States was to offer assurances to both sides that the opposing forces were not deployed in a threatening fashion, then it had to verify the suspected locations of armor forces in key sites, and their withdrawal from border areas.

"Inspection" would seem to be too strong a word for these very unofficial tours around cantonments and likely military staging points.

The respective U.S. ambassadors, Robert Oakley and William Clark, conveyed the results of these verifications to Pakistan and India, assuring each that no major military movements were taking place.

The first U.S. *public* statement on the crisis came on April 18, 1990. Robert Kimmett, the undersecretary of state for political affairs and the third ranking official in the department, warned that "there is a growing risk of miscalculation which could lead events to spin dangerously out of control," urging the two sides to "take immediate steps to reduce the level of tension by lowering rhetoric and avoiding provocative troop deployments, and instead to devote their energies to addressing this issue through dialogue and negotiations."[2] Other Americans also took notice of regional developments.

Early in the crisis Congressman Stephen Solarz and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan each spoke about conflict between India and Pakistan, and the need for regional reconciliation and dialog. Solarz had visited South Asia in early 1990 and met with both Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the newly elected government in Delhi.[3] He was highly respected for his energy and knowledge about the region. As chairman of the House Subcommittee on South Asia, he was present at an intelligence briefing where the CIA briefers suggested that the chances of war between India and Pakistan was pegged at somewhat less than 50 percent, but still substantial.

The only other prominent politician to comment on the crisis was Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the senior U.S. senator from New York, who had served a term as ambassador to India. Moynihan had just been briefed by a senior State Department official, and his warnings reflected this briefing. He stated that if a war between Pakistan and India began over Kashmir, Pakistan could not count on American diplomatic or military support and he vehemently accused Islamabad of supporting terrorists and separatists in Kashmir. He did address India – albeit in milder terms – making it clear to New Delhi that the United States, or at least Senator Moynihan, would oppose any offensive operation by India.[4]

A course of action

There was widespread agreement in the Executive Branch that events in Kashmir were out of control and could get even worse. The major focal point of attention were the military movements on both sides of the border, but these had been accompanied by a dramatic increase in threatening rhetoric from both sides, evident in the speeches of Benazir Bhutto and V. P. Singh, both of whom were under attack for being too

soft on Kashmir. V. P. Singh's speech in Parliament 10 April, in particular, came as a "surprise" to senior U.S. officials. There were also military maneuvers that were not entirely normal, as well as a substantial addition to Indian forces in the Vale of Kashmir and along the ceasefire line.

The Bush administration had earlier exhorted the two countries to reduce the level of tension in Kashmir, because, in Kimmett's words, "there was a growing risk of miscalculation that could spin dangerously out of control."[5] This was clearly a U.S. perception. Neither India nor Pakistan were alarmed about the prospect of escalation, especially to a nuclear confrontation, although a few people were privy to the putative nuclear threats issued by Yaqub Khan discussed in Chapter 4. To repeat, even though such threats were discussed in the press, the Americans had no direct or indirect knowledge about these conversations, except the information that they had gone badly.[6]

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) ranked high on the U.S. agenda. In inter-agency discussions in Washington it had been suggested, and agreed, that the U.S. should support strongly various India–Pakistan CBMs, and help them develop such a regime. The idea of a more expanded CBM regime had been proposed in 1985 by the State Department, and belatedly agreed to by Rajiv Gandhi and Zia ul-Haq after the near-war crisis of 1987. The possibility of sharing American intelligence information with one or both sides was raised in these meetings, but no conclusion was apparently reached on this issue. Subsequently, when talks with India and Pakistan took place, American officials adhered to the policy of avoiding the modality of providing information to one side but not the other. There is no evidence that the United States ever provided information from its own National Technical Means (NTM) to either side.

Prospects for American intervention

The situation in South Asia was at this time favorable to external involvement as perceived by Washington. Both states were in a condition of domestic political crisis and their weak governments could not retreat from confrontation without prejudicing their longevity. Pakistan has always sought American intervention in its disputes with India; it was Islamabad that first raised the prospect of excessive Indian military preparations in April. As for India, although the "Indira Doctrine" rejected a role for outsiders in the region by declaring that India would manage regional problems by itself, the United Front government in 1990 had no objection in principle to outside assistance of the sort proposed by the United States. In fact, high-level contact had been

established in late November 1989 when John Kelly, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for the Near East and South Asia, traveled to the region to brief officials about the recent Bush–Gorbachev summit. Kelly met V. P. Singh and others during the UF's first week in office and discussed possible confidence-building measures that might be developed in the region. This meeting was fortuitous: in a non-crisis atmosphere it helped develop the relationship between Kelly and the Indian government.

In the past New Delhi has allowed, and at times encouraged, outside states to play a role in its disputes with Pakistan – but usually when it calculated that such an outside role would work to India's advantage and never as formal "mediators." Many Indian diplomats regard such mediation as a form of pressure that can only be forced upon a weak state. Indian diplomats recall, with distaste, the World Bank's role in bringing about the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, regarded by many outsiders as one of the few shining moments in South Asia's dismal diplomatic record.

Thus, while both Delhi and Islamabad were well disposed toward U.S. assistance in managing the military dimension of the crisis, they differed as to a U.S. role in the Kashmir dimension of the crisis. Pakistan eagerly sought U.S. help in pressuring India to change its policy on Kashmir, while the Indians firmly resisted a U.S. role in what they regarded as a domestic political dispute.

Apparently, differing assessments of the crisis had reached President Bush by May. The U.S. ambassadors in New Delhi and Islamabad were already deeply involved in the process of crisis management through their independent assessment of military positions and their reassurances to the respective governments. They also believed that hostilities were not imminent, although there was a risk of war later in the year. The Department of State was slightly more concerned, with the CIA holding the most alarmist position, seeing the possibility of a conflict that might acquire nuclear overtones. Still, even the most pessimistic view held that the prospects of a conflict were in the 20 percent range. It was the potential for the use of *nuclear* weapons that energized the U.S. government, even if the probability of war was low.

Faced with these different perspectives, the Bush administration decided to err on the side of caution and opted to send a high-level delegation to South Asia in an effort to ease tensions in the region.[7] A conversation with one of the members of the delegation at that time revealed concern, but not panic, over the situation in South Asia. Thus, it was the *prospect* of escalation to a nuclear confrontation that alarmed Washington. Gates himself, according to one participant in these deliberations, suggested the idea of a mission.

The Gates mission

On May 16 the White House announced that a special envoy, Robert Gates, the deputy national security advisor, would be sent to South Asia. The Gates mission was to be in Pakistan and India on May 19–21. A White House spokesman said that the United States had urged all concerned to take steps to restore calm and security and to allow political dialog to address the problem of Kashmir in the hope that India and Pakistan, both friends of the United States, would work together to reduce tension. The spokesman emphasized President Bush's deep concern over the build-up of the crisis. The president, he said, had been talking with the Indian and Pakistani leadership for months but now (May 16), as the situation had deteriorated, a special White House envoy would be able to obtain a more realistic and accurate assessment.[8]

At the time of the announcement of the mission Gates was in Moscow. Gates' team included the assistant secretary of state for the Near East and South Asia, John Kelly, and the senior National Security Council staffer responsible for South Asia, Richard Haass. None of them had close familiarity with South Asia – Haass and Kelly were Middle East specialists, Gates himself had been a career CIA analyst specializing in the Soviet Union.

The White House was extremely careful in defining the purpose of the Gates mission, taking into account India's vehement rejection of third-party mediation in what they regarded as a bilateral issue. According to U.S. sources, the primary objectives of the mission were to deliver presidential messages to leaders of both countries and also to gain a first-hand appreciation of the situation.[9] A senior official in the Bush administration said in a public interview that the "mission was intended to address the immediate possibility of miscalculation and inadvertent escalation to war, not the long-term political problems besetting the India–Pakistan relationship."[10] This is confirmed by contemporaneous conversations with at least one of the mission's members. Gates, according to one senior State Department official who was not part of the mission but who was involved in setting its parameters, wanted a "serious trip, no social events, only substantive discussions with the most important officials in both countries."

Publicly the Gates mission statement declared that: "Our major objective is to help both sides avoid a conflict over Kashmir, which would entail great loss of life, and damage to both countries, and to begin the sort of political dialogue which would not only reduce tension but could lead to a peaceful and permanent resolution of the Kashmir problem, as called for under the Simla Agreement. . . . We are urging

both sides to restrain their rhetoric and to take confidence-building measures on the ground to lower tension."[11]

The different inclinations of each member of the team seem to have shaped their approach to the venture. Gates, who retained close ties with the CIA (the most alarmist of all the government agencies on this issue), was later to make significant claims about the success of the mission. Three years later he was to cite it as a rare but classic example of "preventive diplomacy," a term popularized by the then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali. Assistant Secretary Kelly, guided by Gate's analysis and the views of his two ambassadors, was more relaxed about the crisis itself but took the mission seriously. Haass's view was that the trip was a good example of pre-emptive diplomacy designed to reduce the likelihood of a more serious crisis later in the fall of 1990.

The mission in Islamabad

At the proximate time when the 1990 crisis erupted, a series of "killer issues" were already threatening U.S.–Pakistan relations. These included narcotics, terrorism, and Pakistan's nuclear program. Additionally, there was concern about the fragility of Pakistan's democracy. All this was taking place in the context of Pakistan's sharply declining role as a strategic ally after the Soviet Union pulled out of Afghanistan in 1988.

While Washington was increasingly worried about the situation in the subcontinent, Benazir Bhutto was touring the Middle East to solicit Arab support for Pakistan's position on Kashmir. She was in no mood to be lectured to by Americans. Some Bush administration officials believe that she was trying to avoid meeting Gates: "We tried to meet her in three places in the Middle East, but she never showed up," in the words of one mission member, who also disputes Benazir's assertion that she had never been contacted by the Americans. The U.S. account has it that she was indeed contacted directly in the various countries she was visiting. She had been asked to meet with Gates in one of several Middle East countries either before or after the mission went to South Asia, but the meeting never occurred. It is unclear whether her caution stemmed from pride and haughteur, or whether she feared a confrontation over Pakistan's actions and its covert nuclear program of which she later, improbably, denied knowledge. It is also possible that she wanted the president and army chief to bear responsibility for yielding to U.S. pressures. She has asserted that the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs or some other government entity had withheld this information from her and that she had wanted to meet with Gates. Thus, when Gates

arrived in Islamabad on May 20, he held meetings with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the Army Chief General Aslam Beg. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her minister of state for defense, Ghulam Sarwar Cheema, were both out of the country.

According to several accounts, including Gates' public discussion of the crisis, the main points made by the mission were: (1) Washington had thoroughly war-gamed a potential India–Pakistan military conflict, and Pakistan was the loser in every scenario. This exercise had been carried out by the U.S. joint chiefs of staff; (2) in the event of a war, Islamabad could expect no assistance from Washington; (3) Pakistan must refrain from supporting terrorism in Indian-occupied Kashmir, avoid military deployments that New Delhi could interpret as threatening, and tone down its war rhetoric; (4) both sides needed to adopt CBMs that had already been discussed, so that this crisis would be more speedily defused and future ones prevented; (5) Gates offered U.S. intelligence support – based on its own "national technical means" to verify a confidence-building regime involving limitations on deployment near the border – if both India and Pakistan concluded such an agreement and were to withdraw their forces from near the border; and (6) he offered to carry a message to India from Pakistan.

General Beg and President Ghulam Ishaq responded defensively, claiming that *India* was using terrorist tactics in Kashmir, that Pakistani public statements had been moderate, and that Pakistani military movements had been less menacing than India's. The Americans believed, however, that Pakistan would shut down training camps for Kashmiri militants and that Islamabad welcomed U.S. efforts to prevent a war between India and Pakistan.[12]

According to Ambassador Robert Oakley, who joined Gates in a subsequent meeting with Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Gates again presented a sober assessment of what would happen in the event of war, spelling out various possible scenarios ranging from the most optimistic to the most pessimistic. He stated that he was certain that if war occurred it would be a conventional war all along the border and not a guerrilla war confined to Kashmir alone. Gates stressed that Pakistan might find the Indian navy in Karachi and the Indian air force striking deep into Pakistani territory. He also told the Pakistani authorities that if war erupted because of a Pakistani initiative, Washington would stop military support and Islamabad could *expect no further assistance*. If a war came, in short, it was likely to have a more disastrous impact on Pakistan than on India.[13] While the United States refrained from accusing the Pakistanis of initiating the crisis, Gates told President Ghulam Ishaq that Pakistan needed to stop

supporting the Kashmiri freedom fighters. Finally, he told the president not to expect any help from the United States as the Americans had acquired hard evidence that Pakistan had crossed the nuclear line.[14] General Beg, who sat quietly most of the time in this meeting, later admitted that Pakistan had already crossed the forbidden line in regard to manufacturing weapons-grade uranium in 1987. Pakistan had made a conscious decision in February 1989 to reduce the level of enrichment because the objective of acquiring a nuclear capability had already been achieved, even though Pakistan's weapons labs had not fashioned this material into a useable nuclear weapon.[15]

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan also told Gates that Pakistan did not desire a war with India and its support to the people of Kashmir was entirely political. He reiterated various proposals that Pakistan had made to India with a view to remove the dangers of a conflict, including Islamabad's proposal that the permanent members of the UN Security Council should be invited to play a role in the process.[16]

During his visit Gates also met Iqbal Akhund, Prime Minister Bhutto's advisor on national security and foreign affairs. Akhund reiterated Pakistani efforts to reduce tension and resolve the ongoing Kashmir dispute. The U.S. mission never received a positive response from Pakistan to their offer of intelligence sharing. Pakistan probably did not want to see such an arrangement develop between Washington and New Delhi, since the offer was contingent upon both sides accepting it. However, one American observer has suggested that neither Pakistan's nor India's intelligence services wanted to see such an arrangement, because such information might have contradicted the advice they were giving their own governments.

The warnings from Gates may have strengthened the importance of nuclear weapons for Pakistan, and to some degree confirmed their existence to the rest of the world because the United States could not keep such developments secret, and Pakistan did not want it to. In the view of some Pakistanis, edging toward an open declaration of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities would demonstrate Pakistan's great-power status to the Islamic world and the new opportunity for Pakistan to exercise its power in Central Asia. At this time Pakistani officials were arguing that their moderate Islamic credentials would be an advantage to the United States, and would more speedily end Soviet power in the north.

Many Pakistanis had no clear idea of the conditions in Central Asia at this time, and grossly overestimated Pakistan's opportunities in this direction, but this was a matter of pride and strategy, of calculated judgment, and wishful thinking, but not a result of an indecisive or

fearful regime with a "lack of will." Indeed, some Pakistanis had concluded that the war in Afghanistan had made them into a major power, and it was now time to exercise that power in several directions. This view was held especially firmly in Pakistan's ISI.[17]

The downside of such a strategy was that it risked alienating the United States, but here Benazir Bhutto was an invaluable asset. She had avoided Gates so that she would not be put in a position of pressuring Ghulam Ishaq and Beg on behalf of the United States; it was far safer for her to let the Americans deal with these two.

The mission in New Delhi

Flying thereafter to New Delhi, Gates and his entourage met with Prime Minister V. P. Singh, to whom he delivered a letter from President Bush, Foreign Minister Gujral, Chief of the Army Staff General Sharma, and Minister of State for Defense Raja Ramanna – one of the key figures in the Indian nuclear weapons program. The Gates mission's visit had been announced by Prime Minister Singh to a Parliamentary Consultative Committee.[18] However, just before the mission's arrival in New Delhi, the Bharatiya Janata Party leader, L. K. Advani, not only strongly advocated that India weaponize its nuclear capability, but also demanded that the Indian army "must be sent to Pakistan to destroy the training camps."[19] Compared to the BJP's assertive statements, the Indian minister of state for defense, Raja Ramanna, ruled out the use of nuclear weapons in the subcontinent – highlighting that the long-term effects of a nuclear exchange would make continued human habitation in the region very difficult.[20]

According to the account of one senior Indian official, B. G. Deshmukh, who was cabinet secretary, Gates informed his Indian interlocutors that "Pakistan had agreed to close training camps for terrorists. He also mentioned that Pakistan had been told not to expect any help from the Americans if they started the war." Deshmukh notes that the Americans "conveyed a similar message to us also . . . with quiet firmness."[21]

In his meetings with Indian officials, Gates' message was essentially the same as the one given to the Pakistanis: avoid provocation that could spiral out of control. Gates relayed the Pakistani promise to shut down the training camps for Kashmiri insurgents. He urged New Delhi to stop its own meddling in Pakistan's Sindh province and improve the human rights situation in Kashmir. Gates also told the Indians that the United States was "prepared to offer its services in ensuring that the troops of the two countries were pulled back from the borders, and remained pulled back. He offered to share the information obtained by American

satellites which, by keeping both sides fully and accurately informed, could avert the danger that either would try to steal a march on the other."[22] In sum, according to one official, the gist of the Gates message was that it would be to neither side's advantage to go to war. India would win, but even if it did, the long-term costs would greatly exceed any short-term benefits.[23]

In his meeting with the visiting Americans, the Indian prime minister told the Americans that support extended by the Pakistanis to what he preferred to call "terrorists" in Kashmir was the root cause of the turmoil in Kashmir, and India would not hold any discussions with the Pakistanis unless these activities were called off.[24] A spokesman of the Indian Foreign Ministry reaffirmed V. P. Singh's assertion and stated that the prime minister had told Gates that it was up to Pakistan to cool the tempers generated in Kashmir. According to another report both Singh and Gujral informed their guests that the Kashmir problem could not be viewed in isolation from the Valley's politics and the history of partition, and had a direct bearing on the survival of a secular India.[25] It seems that Singh more or less rejected Gates' proposal for peace talks with Pakistan, saying that they would not allow alleged Pakistani support for the insurgency in Kashmir to pressure them into talks.[26] Neither did he respond to the American offer of intelligence or satellite information, leaving the issue hanging; this was probably seen as too intrusive an American role. Nor did he have any messages for Pakistan for Gates to deliver (V. P. Singh had been, of course, in direct contact with Pakistani emissaries).

The Indian side reiterated its position that the crisis had been generated by Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir and Punjab, and could only be normalized after it stopped these activities. The movement of additional troops into these two states was explained as being necessary to deal with their internal security situation. Confidence-building measures were then discussed. It was agreed to make fuller use of the hotlines, and for the two armies to keep each other informed about their exercises in border areas.[27] The Indian side then made three specific suggestions. They pertained (1) to an agreement on arrangements for patrolling along the border, with the principle of hot pursuit being accepted; (2) assurances by Pakistan that it would not permit training camps in the future, with some system of verification being put in place; and (3) that a named Sikh terrorist, Lal Singh, who had escaped to Pakistan after trying to kill a senior Indian political leader (Bhajan Lal) in the United States, be arrested and handed over to the American authorities.

These were in the nature of test cases, designed to probe Pakistan's bona fides and American attitudes towards India. In the view of one

Indian official, Gates "thought the . . . requirements were reasonable. Unfortunately, nothing came out of it. [But] the Gates mission did dampen Pakistan's aggressive intentions and the tense situation along the India–Pakistan border did quiet down then."[28] This, of course, was not the Pakistani view, which had concluded that India's newly moved 8th Division was going to attack across the line of control in Kashmir.

Consequences

The Gates mission did have consequences that lasted beyond the crisis itself. According to several sources, Gates came back thinking that while the Pakistan half of the trip went badly, the Indians had been very cooperative. The Pakistanis were dismissive of the offer to monitor troop movements, although they did not oppose it. The Indians were interested and engaged. Benazir's elusiveness contributed to the team's feeling that Pakistan, while still an ally, was both deceitful and unstable. Speculatively, this may have contributed to the subsequent refusal of the United States to "look the other way" when fresh evidence of Pakistan's nuclear program became available later in the year. It certainly reinforced the feeling that a major review of America's South Asia policy was in order, although such a review never took place – it was preempted by the Gulf Crisis later in the year.

At the conclusion of the Gates mission, three critical steps were taken by the two countries to defuse the crisis:

- India announced the withdrawal of its armored forces. It remains unclear which armor was to be involved in these withdrawals. They could not have been the regiments training in the Mahajan firing ranges. Due to climatic conditions these exercises had already been stopped (in April) and the regiments had returned to headquarters. More likely, the armored elements involved were part of the formations deployed in their forward locations that could now be pulled back.
- India proposed a package of military/non-military confidence-building measures to Pakistan. They included: (1) further information sharing on military exercises; (2) information sharing on field firings to avoid civilian casualties across the border; (3) communications being increased between local commanders; (4) joint border patrolling; (5) measures to prevent airspace violations; and (6) exchange of delegations to reaffirm these arrangements.[29] Most of these measures were agreed to one year later.

- Pakistan agreed, in response, to explore the expansion of old CBMs and the establishment of new ones, while making ritual noises about the inadequacy of Indian action on Kashmir and the concentration of Indian troops on its border. Pakistan suggested foreign secretary-level talks being held to resolve all these issues in contention between the two countries.[30]

We cannot say definitively whether the Gates mission and/or the parallel diplomatic steps undertaken by the two U.S. embassies contributed to this improved situation. It is significant that while formal agreement to reduce tensions and move towards an enhanced CBM regime were undertaken *after* the Gates mission, these had been encouraged several years earlier by the American suggestion that India might review the provisions of the Helsinki Accord, and consider their extension to the India–Pakistan situation.[31] The alacrity with which this advice was now accepted, and the manner in which the crisis quickly abated, strengthens the view that the Gates mission and the earlier American diplomacy contributed to defusing this crisis.

It should also be noted that the post-1985 improvement in Indo-U.S. relations enabled the Gates mission to get a more receptive hearing than might otherwise have been the case. Also, the experience in 1987, where the United States managed to lower tensions during the Brasstacks crisis, helped Gates in his meetings with Indian officials and politicians.[32] As an expression of closer U.S.–India ties, Kelly's visit to the new UF government helped establish a relationship that made the later Gates mission possible, and after that, some congruence occurring in America's and India's Gulf policy, including the provision of refueling rights for U.S. Air Force transport planes in transit to the Gulf theater.

While virtually every Indian and Pakistani official that we talked to agreed that the Gates mission had a positive impact on the lessening of regional tensions, the American contribution did not begin with the mission. Informed Americans and regional participants in the crisis agree that the earlier, pro-active role played by the two U.S. ambassadors – Oakley and Clark – backed up by their attachés and the State Department bureaucracy was a significant factor in dissipating misperceptions in both India and Pakistan and reducing regional tensions. The Gates mission must be seen in the context of this larger U.S. diplomatic effort that prepared the ground for averting the conflict. While the Gates mission captured the headlines, the earlier efforts at crisis containment were no less significant, and may have been crucial for achieving whatever results were achieved by Gates and his colleagues.

The Gates mission: an evaluation

Different assessments have been made of the success or failure of Gates' mission. While *Newsweek* reported that Gates came back alarmed and discouraged, the Stimson Center's debate highlighted the success of the mission in terms of providing both India and Pakistan with a face-saving excuse to back off. Similarly, a *U.S. News and World Report* story described the satisfaction of Inder Gujral, the Indian Foreign Minister, with the Bush administration's fairness.[33] Cognizant of Indian sensitivities regarding outside mediation, Gates seems to have been careful in avoiding suggestions that could make the situation difficult for Indian leaders. Perhaps that is why he specifically underlined that Washington did not wish to seek the role of a mediator between India and Pakistan but was merely interested in lowering the prevailing level of tensions. Another factor that seemed to have pleased the Indians was Gates' favoring a dialog, which was in congruence with the spirit of the Simla Agreement rather than draw attention to UN resolutions or even the spirit of the UN Charter.

Within two weeks of the Gates mission the crisis had passed. In early June, India announced that the armor it had sent to the Mahajan range in February would return to its normal stations. Pakistan responded cautiously at first, but grew more enthusiastic as it became clear that the Indians were, in fact, pulling back their forces. Some U.S. intelligence analysts speculate that the withdrawal may have had more to do with the searing summer heat in the Rajasthan desert than any Indian magnanimity, but all agree that moving armor away from areas where Pakistan considered itself most vulnerable was an important step in the right direction. New Delhi's package of confidence-building measures became a subject for discussion between the two countries' diplomats and contributed further to easing the crisis atmosphere on both sides.

Gates' own summary of the mission, which he regarded as one of the high points in his official career, although he does not discuss this episode in his substantial memoir, deserves to be quoted at length:

> There are a few – very few, to be sure – instances where a third party has been able to prevent conflict by simply identifying the danger of war and its consequences. This can work only when neither party really wants war but needs a face-saving device to stand down. This was the case in defusing rising Indo-Pakistani tensions in May 1990. President Bush sent me that month to both Islamabad and New Delhi to convey our worry that the two sides were blindly stumbling toward a war neither wanted. I was armed with detailed information

> about the military capabilities and postures of both countries, along with the suggestions for easing the tensions . . . confidence-building measures (CBMs). . . . I privately told the Pakistani president and Army Chief of Staff that our military had war-gamed every possible scenario for Indo-Pakistani conflict, and that there was not a single scenario in which Pakistan won. I told the Indians the consequences for them of a war, including that it might go nuclear. Neither side really wanted war, both sides acted rationally and the role played by the United States was to give them a way to retreat with no loss of face and to adopt bilaterally a number of CBMs to keep border tensions under control. The evidence of potential disaster for each was compelling. But these propitious circumstances for preventive diplomacy are all too rare.[34]

Subsequently, Gates wrote that:

> In May 1990 President George Bush asked me, as deputy national security adviser, to go to India and Pakistan to see if we could reduce tensions that seemed to be building toward war. I took with me an offer to have the CIA monitor the borders and share information with both sides to provide reassurance that no surprise attack was being prepared.[35]

As to the impact of the Gates mission, the Hersh article and the Burrows and Windrem book characterize it as an unqualified success. As the latter wrote: "Gates quietly defused a situation on the subcontinent that was threatening to go out of control with horrendous consequences."[36] In fact, early reports generally characterized the U.S. intervention as unsuccessful, while retrospective accounts support the notion that the mission achieved its peacemaking aims. On May 24, three days after Gates met with Indian and Pakistani leaders, a senior administration official, perhaps a member of the U.S. delegation, told reporters that the situation in South Asia "is deteriorating very rapidly and ominously."[37] A story appearing in the *Sunday Times* of London on May 27 said that, "intense diplomatic efforts in the past two weeks have failed to defuse the situation." The story continued: ". . . the failure of the Gates mission has been another factor in convincing the United States that war is likely." Clearly, the early impression among both U.S. national security officials and members of the media was that the immediate effect of the Gates mission was not salutary.[38]

Over time, reviews of the U.S. peacemaking effort have become more favorable, ranging from positive (Gates helped to defuse the crisis) to

neutral (the crisis was winding down anyway). The prevailing view among U.S. officials is that Islamabad and New Delhi publicly resisted the Gates message for domestic political reasons, but quietly used the intervention as an excuse to de-escalate a crisis they were already looking for a way out of. As Clark says: "at the end of the day, I think you could say that both Delhi and Islamabad used Bob Gates and his mission as an excuse, if you will, to back off of positions they had been taking."[39]

This perspective is not limited to U.S. decision-makers, who, after all, recommended the Gates mission and therefore had a stake in its success. South Asian officials also view the U.S. intervention in a positive light. As Pakistani Ambassador Abdul Sattar said:

> I think that what is important is not what was happening in the months of January and February, but the projection of what might happen if the trends in motion were not arrested. And I think it is here that the American diplomacy deserves credit. . . . What happened in the spring of 1990 is an illustration of good, useful preventive diplomacy.[40]

Clark reports that Indian officials, too, appreciated the chance to ease the tension: "I did have several senior people, including the prime minister, tell me afterwards that it had been a useful visit, it had allowed a way to back off for both sides, without one having to back down to the other."[41]

The firmest conclusion that can be drawn about the Gates intervention is that it certainly could not have hurt, and might indeed have helped, the impulse for peace in South Asia. Was it a coincidence that India offered to withdraw its forces from Mahajan and suggested a package of CBMs to Pakistan for discussion immediately following the Gates visit? In all likelihood, the reason why these decisions were delayed for a week or two is that, for domestic political reasons, they did not wish to appear overly influenced by the United States. In addition, the fact that the tension eased so quickly in early June would seem to indicate that both sides *were* anxious to back away from the brink of war without appearing weak and that Gates provided them with a mechanism for doing so. Few knowledgeable people would likely quibble with the views of a former senior Bush administration official:

> At worst, you could say what we did was unnecessary. . . . I think that at the risk of sounding self-serving, it was a success . . . my instincts are we slowed it down, we forced people to face up to the

consequences . . . we may have . . . affected the internal debates. What matters is sometimes that when you leave town, the internal debates that took place on either side were affected by what it was we said. We knew we'd given arguments to certain people. And my hunch is again we may have stabilized it by simply what we said . . . we certainly did not make the situation worse, and my guess is we made it better. The facts speak for themselves. If one looks at what South Asia was like, say June 15, it looked a lot better than it looked May 15.[42]

Other countries

We have discussed the American response to the 1990 crisis in this chapter, but some mention should be made of the initiatives of other countries – which were notable perhaps by their limited and tentative nature.

In late May American officials had suggested to Moscow the issuing of a U.S.–Soviet appeal for restraint, but the Soviets demurred. Instead, they quietly encouraged a tension-reducing dialog between New Delhi and Islamabad while the Americans pursued a more high-profile regional initiative. Ambassador Robert Oakley has indicated that both Moscow and Beijing also sent somewhat similar messages to both India and Pakistan asking them to back off.[43]

A few other countries had also expressed interest in developments in South Asia, especially Great Britain. Sensitivity to Kashmir-related issues is especially strong there, because of the large number of migrants from both India and Pakistan and the presence of a large number of ethnic Kashmiris of several different identities. Several MPs raised questions in Parliament and made public statements on the crisis.[44] In early May the Japanese prime minister, Toshiki Kaifu, urged both India and Pakistan to exercise self-restraint and resolve the dispute through negotiations.[45] This was the first time also that a Japanese prime minister offered his services to help resolve the Kashmir dispute; this interest taken by the Japanese prime minister was well taken in the region.[46] Japan, after all, had aid programs and investments in South Asia and good ties with both India and Pakistan.

America's role: a preliminary assessment

A final assessment of America's activist diplomacy will have to wait until an examination of the nuclear dimensions of this crisis, but some preliminary observations can be noted at this point.

First, the United States government had a fairly accurate understanding of the magnitude of the crisis (or crises) brewing in South Asia. While unaware about specific events that were believed to be significant by Indian and Pakistani participants at the time – especially the ambiguous nuclear conversations that had taken place – they acted as if such threats could have been made. At the time, some of the key participants acknowledged that American understanding of the events was incomplete. While the American estimation of the possibility of a future crisis was somewhat greater than that of regional policy-makers, it was not so high as to suggest panic or an imminent conflict being likely to their interlocutors.

Second, in this instance, American diplomacy was dominated by regional specialists. Once regional relations assumed the form of a looming crisis, concern with the *spread* of nuclear weapons was supplanted by concern with the *use* of nuclear weapons. Subsequently, the process was again dominated by the issue-oriented non-proliferation community, but reverted to the regionalists when another crisis (Kargil) occurred in 1999.

Third, the Gates mission built upon a strong framework of regional American diplomacy, utilizing both diplomatic and military assets. If there were any effective CBMs at work during the crisis months, they were the coordinated activities of experienced U.S. ambassadors in each capital and very good regional expertise in the Department of State. The Gates mission was managed with a degree of tact and circumspection that did not alienate or frighten its regional interlocutors. The mission, along with the extensive American efforts that preceded it, was, in our judgment, an example of effective preventive diplomacy.

Fourth, Gates did extract pledges from both sides that they would exercise restraint in their military deployments, although these pledges were in the pipeline anyway, because of India–Pakistan direct diplomacy. Gates believed that he got the Pakistanis to stop government support for the raiders. This is disputed by some Pakistani officials. Further, if there was a pledge, it did not prevent private groups – perhaps with the covert support of Pakistani intelligence services – from training and equipping infiltrators. In the years following the 1990 crisis such infiltrators have entered Kashmir and contributed to the violence and unrest in that state.

Finally, the most disappointing aspect of the American involvement in the 1990 crisis was something that did not occur. Senior officials involved with the Gates mission had planned to undertake a comprehensive review of South Asia once the crisis subsided. "We were going to 'do' South Asia in a big way after the election," in the words of one

White House official. This opportunity never came, because the Gulf crisis claimed the attention of senior officials until the end of the Bush administration, and because Bush was defeated and his foreign policy team was disbanded.

Instead of a nuanced understanding of the region from a potential crisis perspective, the Clinton administration came to view South Asia almost entirely from a proliferation perspective. The intelligence reports that they read when they took office singled out South Asia as one of the world's most dangerous "hotspots," and the most likely place for a nuclear war to break out. This view was not shared by their predecessors, but a proliferation-first strategy, fueled by CIA estimates of the region's instability and by viewing Kashmir as a lit fuse, came to dominate U.S. policy. This had dramatic (and in our view largely negative) consequences. Thus, the 1990 crisis may have had a pernicious effect on America's understanding of South Asia, leading eventually to policies which contributed to an event – the testing of nuclear weapons and the declaration by both India and Pakistan that they had now become nuclear weapons states – that Americans had been desperately trying to avert.

6 1990 as a nuclear crisis

This chapter examines more fully the nuclear dimensions of the compound 1990 crisis. The possibility of India or Pakistan deploying and using nuclear weapons definitely accelerated American interest in the crisis, and alarmed at least some South Asian leaders. It also led to the most extraordinary speculation about the 1990 crisis in subsequent years. It was this putative nuclear element that attracted the attention of the American investigative journalist, Seymour Hersh, and spawned a sensationalized account of the crisis by two others.[1] These, in turn, have shaped perceptions of the region by many outsiders (and also regional strategists), who either feared that India and Pakistan were "on the edge" of a nuclear crisis, or desired that the events of 1990 should, in fact, be deemed to constitute such a crisis.

Many foreign observers, especially Americans, have come to view Kashmir as the most likely trigger for a larger India–Pakistan nuclear war. This is not a new argument. In the 1950s, Josef Korbel, a former Czech diplomat turned professor, who had worked on Kashmir under UN auspices, made the same claim: that Kashmir could lead to a larger war that might ultimately draw the two superpowers into a nuclear confrontation.[2] The scenario offered at that time was that the United States and the Soviet Union, each backing a regional client, might be dragged into a regional dispute, with the ultimate possibility of escalation to a nuclear war. This has been replaced by a different scenario: India and Pakistan, acting on their own and free of Cold War constraints, might escalate the Kashmir conflict to the point where *they* would deploy and even use their small nuclear capabilities against each other.

The regional perspective is very different. For the Kashmiris and most Indians and Pakistanis, *Kashmir*, not nuclear war, is the area's biggest regional security problem. For almost all South Asians the nuclear dimension of the 1990 crisis is an afterthought and, some would argue, a stabilizing development, but Kashmir remains a deeply divisive but

supremely important issue. While many American observers saw the nuclearization of South Asia as the *beginning* of the 1990 crisis, for India and Pakistan it represents only a turning in the road – for some a turning away from war itself as a way of settling the Kashmir dispute.

This chapter summarizes the evolution of nuclear programs and nuclear doctrine in South Asia, and examines the way in which the nuclear issue was injected into what had been a crisis over Kashmir and ambiguous military deployments. We then turn to the nuclear implications of the Gates mission, and conclude with an evaluation of the way in which nuclear weapons serve to stabilize, or destabilize the India–Pakistan relationship, and their role in helping or hindering the search for a solution of the Kashmir issue.

The history of regional nuclearization

Both India and Pakistan moved very slowly toward a nuclear weapons capability. India acquired the capability of a nuclear threshold state via a long, arduous process of building up indigenous technological capabilities. This culminated in a test explosion in 1974, but thereafter the program was frozen because Indira Gandhi was taken aback by the hostile international response.[3]

In Pakistan the situation was somewhat different.[4] During the long rule of President Ayub Khan, nuclear weapons were regarded as irrelevant to Pakistan's defense. Ayub and his military colleagues favored conventional weapons obtained through the alliance with the United States. The first Pakistan politician to challenge this position was Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who argued as early as the mid-1960s that (1) the United States was not a reliable arms supplier, (2) that India was going to acquire a nuclear capability anyway, and that (3) Pakistan's other friends, especially China, might help it to acquire a military nuclear capability.[5] Bhutto also saw nuclear weapons as a way of balancing the power of the military, because the nuclear weapons would presumably be under civilian control. However, it was not until the trauma of 1971 – when Pakistan was forcibly divided in half as a result of the civil war in East Pakistan and Indian military intervention – that a wide sector of Pakistani political and military opinion came to view nuclear weapons as essential for Pakistani security.

In both countries the *military* arguments in favor of an overt nuclear capability were always evident although not very persuasive. For Indian hawks nuclear weapons are seen as balancing both the Chinese and Pakistani programs. For Pakistan, they are seen as balancing India's nuclear program and its larger conventional military capability.

In both countries there are also those who argue that nuclearization would bring important *political* and *symbolic* benefits to their country. India's nuclear policies were influenced by several factors: the existence of an exclusive nuclear club, the cautious détente reached with a nuclear-armed China, the costs of the program, and the deep moral reservations about nuclear weapons that were held by most members of the Indian political elite.

Pakistan's calculations were simpler. First, Islamabad was reacting to the far more mature Indian nuclear program – many in the Pakistani security establishment have always believed that Delhi had secretly acquired nuclear weapons in the 1970s. Second, Pakistan found its strongest justification for retaining the nuclear option in the ever-widening gap in conventional military capabilities, a factor that was the justification for the large American military assistance received in the 1980s. Third, some Pakistanis saw a *positive* role for nuclear weapons and argued in the 1980s that nuclear weapons would enable Islamabad to reopen the Kashmir conflict to its advantage, preventing India from conventional retaliation for fear of an escalation to a nuclear exchange – an analysis that went to the very heart of the subsequent 1990 crisis.[6] Finally, Bhutto also saw nuclear weapons as a way of redirecting and reducing the role of the Pakistan army, and strengthening civilian control over the armed forces.

Under intensive pressure from Washington, Islamabad had stopped producing fissile-grade material in July 1989. However, it is known that after the 1990 crisis Pakistan resumed enrichment, possibly as part of a policy of "strategic defiance" of the United States.[7] One former American official has expressed the belief that Pakistan, anticipating the end of the Cold War, knowingly pushed its nuclear program to allow it to move away from the United States.[8]

In both states nuclear weapons are symbols of technical and technological might, and as such, have been lauded by politicians, journalists, and intellectuals. The scientists who have developed them (and their associated missiles) receive the highest civilian decorations. Both countries hold their nuclear capabilities and, more recently, missile capabilities, to be powerful evidence of the greatness of their respective countries and cultures.

Reliable polling in India and Pakistan has consistently provided support for nuclear weapons *if the other side has them*, but they also show support for denuclearization in the context of a regional arms control agreement.[9] Public opinion has become gradually more hawkish over the years and, in both states, especially after the tests of 1998, nuclear weapons have become important symbols of national pride and

self-assertion. While they are seen as necessary for political and strategic reasons, and do generate pride in the achievements of Indian and Pakistani scientists, nuclear weapons are also viewed as necessary evils, especially among informed elites in both countries. It took the accession to power of the BJP to propel India and subsequently Pakistan into the ambiguous zone where they are no longer non-nuclear states, but had not yet developed and deployed a fully operational nuclear weapon (at least until 2002).

Were there nuclear weapons?

A realistic assessment of the development of nuclear weapons in South Asia is that both India and Pakistan had acquired nuclear capabilities, in the sense that they possessed the ability to produce a crude nuclear device, if necessary, by 1987, but they refrained from converting these capabilities into actual weapons for several years thereafter. How many years, what kinds of weapons, and how many of them were available in 1990 are questions that are still in the realm of speculation. More is known about the delivery systems for these weapons, but even here there is uncertainty regarding the capabilities of Indian and Pakistani aircraft which, at that time, were the only means available to deliver nuclear weapons.

By early 1990 many outside observers adjudged India and Pakistan to be nuclear-weapon *capable*, implying that they either possessed a small number of nuclear weapons, or could assemble them quickly. Informed Indian analyses estimated that Pakistan may have acquired such a capability but that India was not under immediate threat of attack, because it did not then possess any credible means of delivery.

One of the most senior Indian officials, B. G. Deshmukh, wrote (in 1994) that before the crisis, under Rajiv Gandhi's direction, "the defense establishment had . . . been directed to prepare plans for meeting any foreign threat or aggression on the basis of we [*sic*] not having any nuclear weapons."[10] Deshmukh adds that the Pakistanis were told that in case, through any foolhardy action, they did use their nuclear weapons in any part of India, "our clear mandate to our Service Chiefs would be go full steam ahead and dismember Pakistan once and for all." The implication is that at the time of the crisis India did *not* have any nuclear weapons, but instead, as revealed in subsequent briefings, especially by the Indian army, the Indian forces felt that they could have destroyed Pakistan as a state by conventional means.

According to one informed Indian account, India did not have an operational nuclear weapon at the time of the 1990 crisis. The journalist,

Raj Chengappa, who has talked to many of the key participants in the Rajiv and V. P. Singh governments, concludes that India's "option" was not ready at the time, and quotes an unnamed senior official as saying that: "We could have tightened the bolts [of the bomb] but admittedly we were far from ready [to deliver it]."[11] Chengappa's conclusion, based on extensive interviewing, is that "if the push came, India could shove a bomb off a fighter aircraft as the US did in the 1940s" (p. 348) This statement patently misrepresents both the American effort and the Indian program – the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs were delivered by a specially modified advanced bomber and there had been exhaustive pre-testing of both the aircraft and the designs – although the Hiroshima gun-type design had not been field-tested before it was dropped.

Chengappa reiterates Deshmukh's statement that the order given to the Indian armed forces was that if Pakistan ever went nuclear they should proceed to dismember the country – but Deshmukh's phrasing of words is more precise: if the Pakistanis used nuclear weapons anywhere in India such an order would be given, but he is unclear as to what would have been India's response in case Pakistan had either made a declaration of nuclear capability, or tested a nuclear device, or, more speculatively, exploded a nuclear weapon on Pakistani territory, or in a disputed area like Kashmir. There is nothing to indicate that such contingencies had been contemplated by the Indian decision-makers.

K. Subrahmanyam, a former official who is believed to be knowledgeable about India's nuclear weapons program, has written that "the first Indian nuclear deterrent came into existence in early 1990." But this only raises the question as to what the Indian nuclear weapon was intended to deter. In his retrospective account of the development of the Indian program Subrahmanyam suggests that it appears "that the Pakistanis attempted nuclear blackmail in May 1990, when the Pakistan-backed insurgency in Kashmir was at its peak."[12] However, he adds that a "top secret analysis in India on the probability of the Pakistani nuclear threat," had concluded, "that it was not very significant," although the Indian Air Force was put on alert.[13] A few months later, according to Indian intelligence sources cited in the semi-official Kargil Committee Report, Pakistan had by August 1990, "developed a policy of using nuclear weapons as a first resort in case of war."[14]

The most exhaustive account yet provided of the history of the Indian nuclear program is that by an American scholar George Perkovich, who also had access to key figures in the Indian nuclear program, and cites one source, K. Subrahmanyam and an unidentified interviewee, to the effect that between 1988 and 1990 India readied at least two dozen nuclear weapons for quick assembly and potential dispersal to airbases

for delivery by aircraft for retaliatory attacks against Pakistan.[15] This version of Indian capabilities was also widely heard in India after the 1990 crisis, but if Deshmukh and Chengappa are to believed, this may have been disinformation or honest statements by individuals who were not in fact well-informed about the Indian nuclear program but who wished to exaggerate Indian capabilities. Our own information in this regard, based on interviewing sensitively placed sources who were in authority during the crisis, is that India did not have deliverable nuclear capabilities at that time; they were also sanguine in their belief that Pakistan did not possess such capabilities either.

In regard to Pakistan, there is much less hard information and there has not been any independent evaluation as to how close Pakistan was to assembling a weapon in 1990, despite Hersh's assertions. The only comprehensive Pakistani account of the nuclear weapons and missile programs, analogous in some ways to Chengappa's post-test account of the Indian programs, asserts that Pakistan did not actually carry out a mock test of a weapon mated to an aircraft until July 27, 1990, after the crisis had passed.[16] This version claims that this test was the result of an eight-month "exercise" by the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission to perfect the delivery of a nuclear weapon by an aircraft, and that this process began only after "it was confirmed in 1988 that India has perfected the delivery of nuclear device on Soviet-supplied MiG 27 and MiG-23 aircraft and has started work on a surface to surface missile system."[17] While this version of Pakistan's progress towards a deliverable weapon could be accurate, there is no independent confirmation available.

Pakistan did not acknowledge that it had a nuclear weapon for several years thereafter, although individual Pakistanis have recently claimed that Islamabad did have a "nuclear arsenal" in 1990. General Aslam Beg, former COAS of the Pakistan army, states that in 1990 India had 60 or 70 devices by 1989, and that its stockpile reached 200 by 2001.[18] He has also stated that Pakistan had only 30 weapons after ten years of production. Again, even though Beg must have known exactly what Pakistani capabilities were, his account cannot be relied upon since he was the leading proponent of the argument that India has been deterred by Pakistan's nuclear capabilities on several occasions in the past.

We conclude that there was a divergent and mismatched set of perceptions that might have induced caution. India had no or very few nuclear devices – as distinct from weapons that are tested and deliverable – but most Pakistani officials did believe that India's nuclear program was very mature and advanced. Pakistan may, similarly, have had a few nuclear devices, possibly in an unassembled state, but no Indian seems

to have thought in 1990 that there were several of them, or that they could be effectively delivered, or that India could not have withstood a Pakistani nuclear strike and retaliated with a massive conventional counter-attack, having as its goal the destruction of Pakistan.

There was a state of deterrence stability obtaining in that India felt secure that its conventional capabilities were adequate to retaliate, and that Pakistan's nuclear capabilities were either miniscule or non-existent. Pakistan assumed that its few weapons would provide an adequate deterrent against a likely Indian attack – especially since India had been placed on the defensive in Kashmir. Neither side had the numbers or the doctrine to contemplate a prolonged nuclear war, or a nuclear war-fighting scenario. This situation is slowly changing now as both sides appear to be building up modest but real arsenals, and the means of rapidly delivering them – missiles and aircraft. They can now contemplate counter-value strikes (against major cities), and a decapitation strike (against the command centers that would have the authority to use nuclear weapons in retaliation). Probably beyond the capability of either country would be a counter-weapon strike directed against the nuclear weapons of the other side. India is too big, and the weapons could be kept very far from the Pakistan border; Pakistan is also a large country, and its weapons could be shifted from place to place, although this creates some moderate risk of accident, theft, or miscalculation.

Nuclear weapons in Indian and Pakistani strategy

While they were developing weapons, India and Pakistan were also developing rudimentary nuclear doctrines, and the issue of nuclear strategy became a matter of public discussion among civilians and the armed forces. It is possible to trace the evolution of these doctrines in both states.[19]

The view of the Indian "strategic enclave" – that cluster of scientific, bureaucratic, and political leaders and opinion-makers who have long-favored nuclearization – was that nuclear weapons *enhance* a state's larger strategic capability, and that they are not war-fighting assets.[20] Pro-nuclear Indian writers seem to equate the idea of nuclear weapons with great-power status; the five permanent members of the UN Security Council are all great powers, or at least used to be so designated, and all of them have nuclear weapons: thus, an ambitious, "rising" power such as Delhi had to acquire them also. For many Indian nuclear advocates, a Pakistan program might be unwarranted but allowed India to move to the next level of overt nuclear capability; India could always

deal with Pakistan conventionally, but nuclear weapons would project India as a great power.[21]

The Indian leadership, however, did not wish to be stampeded into a full-scale nuclear program by open evidence of a Pakistan bomb. The Indian political community had resisted pressure over the years to go nuclear, and had accepted, with an equanimity that drove the Indian hawks into a frenzy, the existence of a Pakistani nuclear program. Brasstacks had been the last opportunity to destroy that program; but even if they had gone to war with Pakistan, and destroyed Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, it would still not have eliminated the larger, Chinese nuclear threat. The fragile United Front coalition was not prepared to make such hard decisions.

While there were Pakistanis who argued that nuclearization would enable Pakistan to project itself as a great power, the chief arguments in favor of its program were that (1) nuclear weapons would be an equalizer vis-à-vis India – balancing out India's larger conventional forces and deterring its nuclear weapons – and (2) a nuclear Pakistan might be able to use more freely low-level pressure against India in Kashmir. Thus, in the 1980s, the Pakistan army had at least discussed strategies by which nuclear weapons would be used not only to deter an attack on Pakistani cities, but to deter by defending against a conventional Indian attack across the long frontier. Pakistani officers were writing publicly about extending the rungs of an "escalation ladder," recreating in South Asia the circumstances that had taken place thirty years earlier between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Thus by 1990 a number of arguments in favor of nuclearization had been fully considered, but constraints on both programs were still very persuasive. The cost of a nuclear weapons program, the problem of acquiring effective delivery systems, moral considerations, and the opposition of other states, especially the United States, which had developed a whole array of economic sanctions to be deployed against any new nuclear state, all served to inhibit the nuclear programs in both India and Pakistan.

Despite Delhi's restraint after the 1974 test, the public statements made by senior Indian officials throughout the 1980s left no doubt that India reserved the right to deploy nuclear weapons if its security predicament so demanded. The conditions and circumstances of such a deployment have never been made clear, there may not even have been an agreement as to what they were. After the Brasstacks crisis of 1987 India increased its stockpiles of plutonium and made qualitative improvements in weapons design and delivery capabilities. It now builds and deploys the tactical Prithvi missile, which can carry a nuclear

warhead of one ton over 150 km, or one-half ton over 250 km in a payload/range combination, and is working on a medium-range ballistic missile, the Agni II, which would enable it to reach eastern China, and an Agni III, which would cover all of China.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Islamabad had been judged nuclear-capable by the United States and the rest of the non-proliferation community in increasingly explicit terms. By warning about Islamabad's nuclear progress and exhorting Pakistan to refrain from developing nuclear weapons, Washington inadvertently lent credibility to a Pakistani nuclear deterrent where it mattered most – in New Delhi. Pakistan had also acquired suitable delivery systems – reportedly the Chinese M-11 missile, in addition to its own fleet of high performance F-16 aircraft and newer missiles, developed with outside technical assistance, such as the Shaheen, the Hatf, and the Ghauri. However, the distances between lucrative targets and air force bases in South Asia are so short that a very slow aircraft, such as the American-built C-130 transport, mentioned by one source as a possible delivery vehicle, could plausibly deliver a first generation nuclear weapon in an "out of the blue" attack. Pakistan used these aircraft in 1971 to drop drums of napalm on remote Indian posts in the Himalayas. However, if such aircraft were used to strike targets very far from the border or in the face of an air defense system on high alert its chances of success would be very low.

By 1990 public statements by leaders in each country had begun to display patterns of worst-case thinking. As discussed in Chapter 4, senior Pakistani officials, including President Zia ul-Haq and Dr. A. Q. Khan, used the Brasstacks crisis to convey to India and the rest of the world a declaration (some would say threat) of Islamabad's nuclear muscle, even though both declarations came after the crisis itself was resolved. Between 1987 and 1990, notwithstanding their denials that Pakistan was a nuclear weapon state, Pakistani leaders at the highest levels often referred to a prevailing situation of mutual nuclear deterrence on the subcontinent. Indian statements were less pointed, but their net effect was the same. In sum, objective evidence suggests that both sides were nuclear capable, in the sense that they could assemble a nuclear device at short notice, while mutual worst-case analyses ensured that the opponent's capabilities loomed even larger than objective circumstances would strictly warrant. In the sphere of intentions, public statements emanating from New Delhi and Islamabad during the late 1980s left no doubt that the two sides were prepared to contemplate the nuclear dimension in the event of a major conflict.

The injection of nuclear weapons into the crisis

Nuclear weapons and Kashmir have been linked publicly for a long time. Perhaps the first author to do so in 1954 was Josef Korbel, who speculated that Kashmir might trigger a war between the superpowers.[22] Thirty years later, in a book on the Pakistan army, the nuclear dimensions of the Kashmir conflict were noted by one of the authors in a discussion of the evolution of Pakistan army military doctrine as of 1984.

> One does not have to be an Indian strategist to calculate also that a Pakistani bomb might enable Pakistan to reopen the Kashmir issue by the threat of force: if nuclear weapons deter each other they may also inhibit direct military conflict between states that possess them; a Pakistani leadership that was bold enough could attack and seize Kashmir at a time when India was in disarray.[23]

This passage came to the attention of senior Indian military intelligence officers who quizzed one of the authors about its meaning. It was quoted by Indian strategists as proof that Pakistan's nuclear program had emboldened it to launch an offensive in Kashmir, although they never quoted the sentence that concluded the above-cited passage: "Pakistani analysts make the opposite case: an Indian government could do the same to a weak Pakistan."[24] While the proposition of a bomb-as-umbrella is plausible, there is no evidence that this factor contributed to the *initial* uprising in Kashmir. There is some question, however, as to whether its new nuclear capability might not have given Pakistani leaders the confidence to expand the conflict once it was underway.

Senior Pakistani officials began *publicly* talking about nuclear deterrence in South Asia as early as 1987.[25] Prior to 1990, Indian commentary on the regional nuclear balance was more restrained: few analysts publicly accepted the thesis that nuclear weapon capabilities would deter war between India and Pakistan. The Kashmir crisis brought about a pronounced shift in the Indian nuclear discourse. Although serving officials do not discuss nuclear deterrence in South Asia, other members of India's strategic elite do so very frequently now. A quasi-official strategic community, composed mainly of retired civil servants and military officers, has, from 1990 onward, closely examined the implications of regional nuclear capabilities for Indian security. For the most part, India's pro-nuclear strategic thinkers have embraced the idea that nuclear deterrence does reduce the chance of war between India and Pakistan and that this phenomenon was evident in the 1990 crisis.

K. Subrahmanyam has written three years *after* the crisis that:

> The awareness on both sides of a nuclear capability that can enable either country to assemble nuclear weapons at short notice induces mutual caution. This caution is already evident on the part of India. In 1965 when Pakistan carried out its "Operation Gibraltar" and sent in infiltrators, India sent its army across the cease-fire line to destroy the assembly points of the infiltrators. That escalated into a full-scale war. In 1990 when Pakistan once again carried out a massive infiltration of terrorists trained in Pakistan, India tried to deal with the problem on Indian territory and did not send its army into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.[26]

General K. Sundarji, a former army chief, concurred: "the chances of a conventional war between India and Pakistan have gone down considerably." He argues that: "if you could go back to 1947 as a method of replaying events once again, but with the added change of a nuclear capability of this nature as a backdrop, I rather suspect that many of those three wars would not have happened." While leaders on both sides once viewed war as a means to achieve certain policy objectives, "today I do not think the same calculus can apply." Sundarji adds that, because of nuclear deterrence, the menu of Indian responses to Pakistani provocation in Indian-held Kashmir no longer includes launching a bold offensive thrust across the Punjab border. Of Indian leaders, he says: "The reason why they've hesitated to take recourse to their stated, avowed strategy of reacting in the plains conventionally is because of the nuclear equation. . . . I've got no doubt in my mind at all."[27] As a "senior Indian general" is believed to have remarked, "what the Pakistani nuclear capability does is to make sure the old scenarios of Indian armor crossing the Sukkur barrage over the Indus and slicing Pakistan in two are a thing of the past."[28]

These views are shared in Pakistan, where there is even greater faith in nuclear deterrence, as well as a more operational approach to the introduction of nuclear devices, because of the role of the Pakistan army in doctrinal development. That Islamabad's unannounced nuclear weapon capabilities kept the Indians at bay even before the May 1998 tests is an entrenched part of the country's nuclear folklore. Pakistanis have argued that India was deterred by a Pakistani nuclear capability four times: in 1984 (when there were rumors of an Indian attack on Pakistan's nuclear facilities, 1987 (during Brasstacks), 1990, and, most recently, 1999, during the Kargil crisis. Abdul Sattar notes the "indispensable contribution" Pakistan's "nascent nuclear capability has

made to deterrence of aggression and maintenance of peace."[29] Now retired, Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Mirza Aslam Beg, have affirmed their belief that Islamabad's nuclear posture has prevented India from attacking Pakistan in 1990. As Beg says: "Far from talk of nuclear war, there is no danger of even a conventional war between India and Pakistan . . . . As compared to previous years, there is no possibility of an India–Pakistan war now."[30] Beg's comments also illustrate the usefulness of ambiguity:

> The very fact that the people believe that we have the nuclear capability serves as deterrence. They keep repeating that we have the nuclear capability and we assert that we do not have it, and it is this state of uncertainty and ambiguity which serves as a meaningful deterrent.[31]

One area where there is a potentially dangerous mismatch is in the nuclear doctrines of both countries. Well before 1990 Pakistani strategists were discussing the possibilities of a variety of uses of nuclear weapons, as tactical devices, strategically against Indian forces and in city-busting attacks. India's nuclear doctrine, evident in 1990, but subsequently declared openly after the 1998 tests, has it that India would wait for a nuclear attack before using its own weapons in a retaliatory blow. This was the philosophy that underlay V. P. Singh's statements and subsequent declarations by Indian officials, who rejected – and in any case did not have the capability for – a first strike nuclear attack against Pakistan, let alone China.

The Hersh account and its consequences

The most important and influential account of the 1990 crisis views it entirely in nuclear terms, and suggests that India and Pakistan were on the brink of a nuclear war in 1990, and that the timely intervention of the United States averted a catastrophe. In his widely cited *New Yorker* article of March 29, 1993, Seymour Hersh wrote that, "the Bush administration became convinced that the world was on the edge of a nuclear exchange between Pakistan and India." He continued: "in the view of American intelligence, the weak governments in place in Pakistan and India in May of 1990 were willing to run any risk – including nuclear war – to avoid a disastrous military, and thus political, defeat in Kashmir." Hersh quotes CIA deputy director Richard J. Kerr, as calling the crisis "the most dangerous nuclear situation we have ever faced since I've been in the U.S. government. It may be as close

as we've come to a nuclear exchange. It was far more frightening than the Cuban missile crisis." This reflects Kerr's personal evaluation of the crisis, but Kerr's further statement that "there's no question in my mind that we were right on the edge. This period was very tense. The intelligence community believed that without some intervention the two parties could miscalculate – and miscalculation could lead to a nuclear exchange," is an accurate reflection of the thinking in some elements of the U.S. intelligence community. According to one senior American official involved in the crisis, the key word here is "could," which itself involves a judgment about future possibilities. Gates himself told Hersh that "there was the view that both sides were blundering toward a war" and "I was convinced that if a war started, it would be nuclear."[32]

Our assessment, after conversations with a large number of American, Pakistani, and Indian civilian officials, diplomats, military, and intelligence officers is that Hersh's account is largely inaccurate. It reflects the most alarmist spectrum of American views during the crisis. For example, his statement that Pakistan, in response to India's build-up of conventional forces in Kashmir and Rajasthan, "openly deployed its main armored tank units along the Indian border and, in secret, placed its nuclear-weapons arsenal on alert," is incorrect. Such assertions reflect the worst-case assessment of some individuals at that time, but that does not make them true.

One of Hersh's most important assertions is that:

> Sometime in the early spring of 1990, intelligence that was described as a hundred percent reliable – perhaps an NSA intercept – reached Washington with the ominous news that General Beg had authorized the technicians at Kahuta to put together nuclear weapons. Such intelligence, of "smoking gun" significance, was too precise to be ignored or shunted aside. The new intelligence also indicated that General Beg was prepared to use the bomb against India if necessary. Precisely what was obtained could not be learned, but one American summarized the information as being, in essence, a warning to India that if "you move up here" – that is, begin a ground invasion into Pakistan – "we're going to take out Delhi."[33]

American officials familiar with the flow of intelligence at that time recall that they saw such reports, but like most intelligence, it was not 100 percent evidence that there was going to be a nuclear war. The phrase, "if necessary," covers a multitude of sins: predominant American thinking at the time was that a nuclear war was possible, but only if

either side miscalculated and thought that the other might launch an "out of the blue" attack, or if there were to be ground warfare and one side or the other were to fare badly. The judgment in Washington was that neither Pakistan nor India had fully deployed nuclear forces, nor did they have a doctrine or strategy for nuclear weapon use. There was also no evidence that India was aware of any Pakistani preparations to launch a nuclear strike, although the Yaqub Khan conversations did alarm V. P. Singh and Inder Gujral. This experience may explain why Gujral later supported the weapons program when he became prime minister in another coalition government.

Our observation, after talking to relevant officials on both sides, is that while each knew of its own feeble nuclear capabilities, and was somewhat more uncertain of those available to the other side, neither believed that the other side would launch a pre-emptive, "out of the blue" nuclear strike, or even attempt to attack such nuclear forces with its own conventional airpower. The former would have required assurances from the scientists that the crude nuclear devices then in each country's possession would have worked as a weapon (that is, that they would have been safe for air crews to handle, that they could have been armed after take-off, and that they would produce the desired yield and effect on the appropriate target). The latter would have required that one side or the other had completely accurate information regarding the location of the others' nuclear weapons. This would have been impossible for Pakistan to discover concerning India, and very difficult for India to have discovered vis-à-vis Pakistan, especially if the latter's nuclear devices had been moved out of the facility where they were assembled.

As for Hersh's declaration that "by the end of June, the crisis was over," and that the Gates mission had "defused what looked to be inevitable warfare,"[34] interviews with key Indian and Pakistani leaders involved in the crisis lead us to conclude that while the Gates mission was regarded as helpful, few believed that it was critical to the termination of the crisis; considerably more stress is placed on the early and active intervention of the two American embassies, plus the evolution of talks between Indian and Pakistani officials from cold hostility to accommodation.

Some of Hersh's allegations had already appeared two years before his article was published. In May 1990, a week after the Gates mission departed from the region, the London *Sunday Times* reported that "new information in the hands of both superpowers suggests that [both India and Pakistan] have been readying their nuclear arsenals." Anticipating the Hersh version, the *Sunday Times* wrote that,

> American spy satellites have photographed heavily armed convoys leaving the top-secret Pakistani nuclear weapons complex at Kahuta, near Islamabad, and heading for military airfields. They have also filmed what some analysts said were special racks designed to carry nuclear bombs being fitted to Pakistani F-16 aircraft.

According to this report, "the Soviet Union has detected signs that" India's nuclear weapons "are being readied for use." The *Times* reported a consensus in Washington "that if war breaks out, a nuclear exchange is possible and this is more likely if Pakistan faced a full-scale invasion."[35] Again, the term "possible" covers a variety of sins.

Other accounts of the military and nuclear components of the 1990 crisis support and embellish Hersh's reconstruction of events. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported in 1992 that

> according to leaks from the then V. P. Singh government in New Delhi, Gates was told by Pakistan's president Ghulam Ishaq Khan that in the event of a war with India, Pakistan would use its nuclear weapons at an early stage. Gates subsequently relayed this to New Delhi.[36]

None of the members of the Gates mission that we have interviewed, let alone Pakistani officials, support this assertion, nor does the version published by William E. Burrows and Robert Windrem, which claims that in May the CIA learned that Pakistan had finally converted its highly enriched uranium from gas to metal and atomic bomb cores, two of which were machined and "stored near the other components needed to make a complete weapon so the Pakistani bomb . . . could be assembled in as little as three hours." Although the U.S. national security community was divided over whether or not Islamabad had succeeded in making its F-16s capable of carrying and delivering nuclear weapons, Burrows and Windrem find "solid evidence" that Pakistani C-130 transport aircraft had been "reconfigured to drop an atomic bomb on New Delhi";[37] it is impossible to confirm or deny this version of events, and it is entirely possible that Pakistan had reduced the assembly time for a bomb, and that aircraft had been reconfigured. Indeed, it is possible that the same steps were taken on the Indian side. However, the testimony of relevant military officials from both countries is that they did not at any time undertake these preparations, nor did they believe that they would soon be engaged in a nuclear conflict.

Since its publication in 1993, Hersh's account has been widely criticized by U.S. diplomats and military attachés posted in Islamabad

and New Delhi during the spring of 1990, as also by regional policy-makers, who tend to regard the whole nuclear dimension of the crisis as exaggerated, if not fabricated, by the Americans. In particular, the U.S. ambassadors involved in the crisis decision-making at that time, Robert Oakley in Islamabad and William Clark in New Delhi, directly contradict Hersh's central claims. Oakley and Clark deny any knowledge of the possible National Security Agency (NSA) intercept from Pakistan that is said to have authorized the assembly of nuclear weapons. Oakley contends that the issue of Pakistan violating the Pressler Amendment "had nothing to do . . . at least so far as we knew, with the preparation or deployment of nuclear weapons or the supposed evacuation of Pakistan's main uranium enrichment facility at Kahuta." As for Hersh's account of F-16s on strip alert, the U.S. air force attaché in Islamabad, Don Jones, called it "the silliest allegation I read in the article, and there were a lot of silly things in the article . . . some of the things he said were just on the face of it, ridiculous. It's not true." Moreover, Jones adds:

> The Pakistan air force F-16s were sheltered. They were all in sheltered revetments. You'd have to have a camera capable of seeing through three feet of concrete to know what was underneath. They did not leave their alert birds out in the open. They were all sheltered. So from any aspect that you care to look at it, that particular statement simply was not – does not hold water. It's so silly that it – that it found its way into print astounds me, really.[38]

Hersh's version of the Pakistani decision-making process – that in early April 1990 General Aslam Beg, Pakistan's ranking military officer at the time, had authorized the technicians at Kahuta to assemble nuclear weapons and that he was prepared to use the bomb against India if necessary – has been categorically rejected by a number of the Pakistanis involved. Beg has stated at times that the fear of a nuclear war was in the American mind but not in those of the Indians and Pakistanis, although he has also been recorded as saying that the possibility of Pakistan's possessing a nuclear weapon was enough to deter New Delhi from adventurism. Beg has gone to the extent of saying that the Pakistanis were not even thinking of a war, and the threat of war was blown out of all proportions by the Americans, who did not want to continue their military aid program to Pakistan following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and were looking for an excuse to snap the aid linkage with Pakistan.[39] It is interesting that Beg and his Indian counterpart both single out the Americans as having placed too great a weightage on nuclear considerations in order to pressure

their respective countries to adhere to various arms control or nuclear restraint arrangements.

Beg's Indian counterpart, General Sharma, also scoffs at the notion of the Pakistanis preparing for nuclear war:

> There is a lot of bluff and bluster from Pakistan. It is different to talk about something and totally different to do something. In return it is bluff and bluster from India that we would do this and that. In hard military terms your capability is not judged by the bluff and bluster, but by what you have in your pocket and what you can do with it.[40]

Sharma thereby reveals some doubts as to whether India had nuclear weapons by 1990. Although he and other generals had been asking for nuclear weapons from the mid-1960s onward, it is possible that they were not privy to developments in the Indian weapons program.

On the face of it, conversations with senior American, Indian, and Pakistani officials seem to indicate that the facts about what was happening in 1990 reside somewhere between the Hersh account and that portrayed in the Stimson Center proceedings. The discrepancies between them are rooted in disagreements within the U.S. government over exactly what the Pakistani leadership was doing with its nuclear capabilities as well as between the Indians and Pakistanis themselves, as to what the capabilities of their respective states were, let alone their intentions. In particular, the views of some Americans may have changed between 1990 and 1993, when Hersh's account first appeared. In 1990 there was incomplete and fragmentary evidence, some of it alarming, but not conclusive to the effect that India or Pakistan were thinking of, or were even capable of, delivering a nuclear weapon upon each other. By 1993 their understanding of the crisis had become more balanced.

Clearly, however, Pakistan was doing something. Clues to this can be found in Oakley's discussion with Hersh, in which his denials of Pakistani nuclear preparations are substantially more tepid than his comments during the Stimson proceedings. He has been quoted as saying that "the evacuation of Kahuta is not necessarily evidence of war," because Pakistan has long feared an Indian first strike against the enrichment facility.[41] This would imply either that there *was* an evacuation, or at least that intelligence data *suggested* Kahuta was being cleared out. On the truck convoy, Oakley reportedly told Hersh that: "We never had any *hard* indications that any nuclear warheads had been delivered to an air base. You could *guess* that" (italics in original). An oblique exchange between Oakley and Colonel Jones is also

suggestive. According to the Stimson account, Oakley facetiously says: "Don, I do not want to put words in your mouth, but with respect to Seymour Hersh's allegation or claim that Pakistani nuclear devices were starting to be deployed from Kahuta to the various airfields – that's because they were in big crates on big trucks. And on top of each crate it said, 'Pakistan Nuclear Devices,' – headed for airport." A moment later Jones replies: "Mr. Ambassador, you probably remember when we found out the trucks were being moved – and how that got blown out of proportion." Oakley does not respond. These comments strongly imply that U.S. intelligence had picked up signs of *some* unusual movements that suggested at least the possibility of nuclear material being moved. In sum, as Oakley says, "ISI was putting out all sorts of messages." Intelligence analysts in Washington found these messages more credible than U.S. diplomats in the field. A paragraph in Hersh's article captures this divergence of perspectives:

> One American nuclear-intelligence expert subsequently described Oakley's comments as a "classic case of what we were dealing with" in reporting to the State Department and the White House on an ally's nuclear-weapons program: "It's a warning situation, but they want smoking guns for everything. The guy is saying, 'Wait until the bombs are dropped on New Delhi.'"[42]

A senior American diplomat, now retired, responds that intelligence analysts are prone to making "worst-case" analyses and judgments, putting together fragments of information into an alarming "big picture" that may not correspond with reality.[43]

It is also possible that all these Pakistani actions suggestive of nuclear delivery preparations were a colossal bluff. Without corroboration from Pakistani leaders, only a circumstantial case can be made for the claim that Islamabad devised a clever hoax to achieve its objectives in 1990. Pakistan certainly had the motive: it interpreted Indian deployments in Rajasthan as possible preparation for a conventional assault that could sever the strife-ridden Sindh province from northern Pakistan. As tensions rose, Pakistani officials may have believed it necessary to do something dramatic to signal their deterrent resolve; this need was greater than that on the Indian side because, after all, New Delhi had tested a nuclear explosive device, while Pakistan had not. Faking nuclear delivery preparations would have spurred the United States into action. The precedent was there: South Africa did something like this a few years earlier, and it had an impact on American policy. Was it the Pakistani calculation that Washington would intervene to ease the tension, or at

least pass along its observations to Indian leaders, who would be deterred from any aggression they might be contemplating? Hersh's anonymous source said of the Pakistani truck convoy, "their big mistake was putting on more security than they needed." A contrary interpretation is that the Pakistanis put on *just the right amount* of security: enough to set off alarm bells in Washington. Burrows and Windrem note that the idea of a Pakistani bluff "was later given credence in some intelligence circles," especially considering that "the data collected by U.S. intelligence systems, far from being ambiguous, were almost unbelievably explicit."[44] To make an analogy to a murder case, Pakistan had the motive and the weapon, and was seen at the scene of the crime. What is missing is a credible eye-witness account of precisely what happened at the crime scene, or a confession from the murderer.

As for the Gates mission, the claim by Hersh that it was a direct outcome of signs picked up by U.S. intelligence that Pakistan was making nuclear delivery preparations is neither provable nor disprovable on the basis of existing evidence. However, the embassies' concern was different; they (and the NSC) believed that without timely intervention, Indian–Pakistani tension would develop into an inexorable momentum toward war in the fall of 1990. U.S. intelligence estimated at the time that there was a 10 to 20 percent chance of war. As one former senior Bush administration official says, the U.S. view was that, "there was a considerable chance of war. That said, no one could map out exactly what it meant. How serious it would go, how it might escalate, whether it would become a major conventional war, or something else; nobody knew exactly whether it would take place, much less how it might evolve." This official further recalls that the Indians and Pakistanis "were not acting with sufficient sobriety. There was a little bit of recklessness in the air. There was a little bit of blindness or forgetfulness about how destructive wars can be." Furthermore:

> I think for most of us who were involved, nuclear weapons formed the backdrop for the crisis . . . the concern was not that a nuclear exchange was imminent; the concern was that this thing was beginning to spin out of control and that would lead to clashes, potentially conventional warfare. Most of our analysis suggested that India would fare better than Pakistan, and that very early on, as a result, Pakistan might want to consider threatening . . . a nuclear action. Or, that India, thinking about that, would escalate conventionally very early on, to eradicate it.

The nuclear issue and the crisis

Was there any link, at that time, between Washington's response to the crisis and its concern over the expanding covert Pakistani nuclear weapons program? Pakistan was, after all, "sanctioned" later in the year when President Bush was unable to certify to Congress, as required by the Pressler Amendment, that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear weapon, and that continued American assistance to Islamabad would be helpful in ensuring that it did not acquire one. But several U.S. officials interviewed for this project deny that such a link existed. While they were concerned about the Pakistani program – indeed, had "certified" Pakistan the year before knowing that Pakistan had probably crossed over some of the "red lines" drawn by earlier administrations – they argued that the crisis had been treated on its merits. Decisive evidence about Pakistan's nuclear program came only in July, according to senior officials. Yet, one can speculate that Pakistan's nuclear program influenced attitudes deeper in the bureaucracy. Those familiar with Pakistan's nuclear program were aware that American officials had "seen no evil, heard no evil, and spoken no evil" for nearly ten years, despite conclusive evidence being available of Pakistan's burgeoning nuclear program. The CIA, in particular, had been angry at the failure to sanction Pakistan in 1988; it had even prepared a video for senior officials showing how Pakistan had violated not only American law, but its own promises to two U.S. administrations. Its officials had been stressing how serious the South Asian nuclear crisis was, and were among Seymour Hersh's most important sources, especially Richard Kerr, who characterized the crisis as "the most dangerous nuclear situation we have ever faced . . . far more frightening than the Cuban missile crisis."[45]

Nuclear lessons

A number of conclusions emerge from this discussion of the nuclear component of the 1990 crisis.

First, most Americans, on the one hand, and most South Asians, on the other, seem to have drawn contrasting, if not divergent lessons about the effects of nuclear weapons and threats during the 1990 crisis. The dominant American interpretation was that the crisis was made worse by the existence of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan, and that 1990 was largely, if not entirely, *a nuclear crisis*. This view seems to have been adopted by the Clinton administration – even though the Bush administration was more relaxed in its sense of urgency and crisis.

On the other hand, Indians and Pakistanis seem to concur that nuclear weapons may have limited the risks of war, but did not inhibit the opportunity to pursue their conflict "by other means" in Kashmir and elsewhere. For them, the nuclear dimensions of the 1990 crisis were quite comparable to similar crises in the Cold War; they were forgotten once the immediate moment of danger had passed. Indians and Pakistanis seem to have concluded that the other side could be fully trusted to behave responsibly in future crises, but in the meantime their deeper antagonisms and disputes could also be actively pursued at low risk. Thus, compared to the Americans, South Asian nuclear experts, including some of the most senior Pakistani generals, assert that the likelihood of regional war was low partly *because* both sides believed that the other had an operational nuclear capability.[46]

Second, there seems to be a fundamental difference of opinion as to whether or not nuclear weapons were actually brandished during the crisis. The public statements by leaders on both sides were ambiguous, yet there remains the suspicion that a nuclear threshold of one sort or another was crossed, and while there is no hard evidence, the behavior of some of the decision-makers (especially the Indian prime minister and the foreign minister) would indicate that they were persuaded (whether by Yaqub Khan, or by other actions or statements is unclear) that a war with Pakistan was quite likely, and that it might be a nuclear war. American officials have not publicly discussed the issue as to whether actual nuclear threats were issued, but Gates and others who discuss the crisis point to its severity, and do not, by inference, rule out the possibility of an actual nuclear threat, although no such threat had been conveyed by one or other of the protagonists to either of the U.S. ambassadors or to Gates' team.

Third, there is no doubt that intelligence was bad on all sides. However, did bad intelligence shape the crises in any significant way? Did political leaders act on the basis of bad intelligence, or were they denied reliable information by incompetent or inadequate intelligence agencies? There can be a failure to look and a failure to "see" evidence, i.e. correctly assess what is known, as well as a failure to properly utilize intelligence in making policy decisions.

Fourth, the crisis indubitably accelerated the region's movement towards the development of operational nuclear weapons and the systems that could deliver them within a fairly short time-frame viz. aircraft and missiles that had been modified to carry such weapons and missiles that were solely developed for this purpose. If the United States had wanted to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to South Asia then 1991–3 was the critical opportunity for it to have acted decisively.

While the Bush administration had planned to devote more attention to the region in its second term, since it had become preoccupied with Gulf issues immediately after the 1990 crisis, that moment never came. The successor Clinton administration plunged into a treaty-oriented approach to non-proliferation largely because of its need to prepare for the NPT review conference, and subsequent negotiations over a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

This turned out to be counter-productive, as the very pressures mounted against India to sign the NPT and the CTBT molded Indian opinion even more strongly in favor of exercising the nuclear option, and Pakistan merely followed suit. Washington never addressed the full panoply of motives (security, prestige, technology transfer, and so forth) that lay behind the Indian nuclear program.

7 Lessons for the real world

Historically, the regional agreements reached between India and Pakistan have not really been substantial achievements, being more directed toward a formal termination of hostilities than a step toward genuine reconciliation and durable peace. The Tashkent agreement contributed to an internal struggle in Pakistan, and the growth of a "stab in the back" sentiment. In the case of Simla, the final agreement between Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi on Kashmir, if there was one, was never recorded, and there remains a serious dispute as to whether it was intended to lead to a permanent resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Even the recent Lahore "bus diplomacy," greeted with such fervor and hope in South Asia and the world, did not prevent the serious conflicts some weeks later in Kargil. While there are bright spots noticeable, South Asia, now nuclear-armed and economically lagging behind the rest of Asia, with well over half the world's poorest people, presents a picture of an area in retreat, not advance.

Our evaluation of the 1990 crisis, plus what we have learned from the study of the 1987 Brasstacks crisis, is that both left the region worse off. There is little to suggest that the lessons of the Brasstacks crisis instructed the political and military leaderships in India and Pakistan on how to avert the subsequent 1990 crisis or guide their actions in handling it. No conflict resulted from these crises, but they did accelerate the nuclearization of South Asia. These events have left India and Pakistan in a worsened position.

On the other hand, the situation could have become far worse. The 1990 crisis could have escalated but did not. Both governments were weak, but not indecisive or inexperienced, and the region came out of the crisis somewhat chastened – in that sense some have compared 1990 with the Cuban Missile Crisis – but it remains to be seen whether regional leaders, both civilian and military, have learned the deeper lessons of 1990 and are aware of the risks that they incurred by their

policies. The Kargil conflict of 1999 casts doubt on this assumption. The subsequent summit meeting between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Pervaiz Musharraf at Agra in July 2001 highlights both the difficulty but also the importance of moving forward to a sustained, high-level India–Pakistan dialogue.

Major conclusions

We have come to the following answers to some critical questions raised in this study. First, was there a crisis? Our view is that the answer has to be a firm "yes" although no military action took place. All the politicians, military and civil officials, and diplomats that we have talked to differ regarding the likelihood or proximity of military action and about the possibility of nuclear weapons entering the crisis; but they are uniformly agreed that they were living through a period of high tension, which had a significant potential to erupt into conflict. It is a matter of semantics whether we identify this period of high tension as a crisis or near-conflict situation. If nothing else, 1990, along with Brasstacks, has become a metaphor in the region for a "close-run thing," although regional elites differ from outsiders regarding their imminence or seriousness.

Second, how did this crisis differ from other crises? It was unique primarily because of its complex nature. It was compounded out of four nearly simultaneous sub-crises. There was a crisis that steadily enlarged in the Indian part of Kashmir; a crisis in the internal polity of both states; an India–Pakistan military crisis that acquired dangerous military overtones; and a suspected nuclear crisis. It was an unusual conjunction of circumstances: a simultaneous convergence of nuclear instability, a risk of conventional war, an internal conflict in Kashmir, and weak or unstable governments coming into power.

Third, what was the underlying cause of the crisis? Our view is that the explosion of dissidence and separatist feelings in Kashmir largely brought it about. This took both the Indian and Pakistani governments by surprise, and necessitated major Indian military movement. The uprising also raised the possibility of Indian forces crossing the LOC to attack training camps located in Pakistan-administered Kashmir or Pakistan itself. The events in Kashmir became the backdrop to subsequent calculations and recalculations of larger military and strategic moves by both sides. Kashmir remains a major point of dispute between India and Pakistan, which necessarily includes the Kashmiris living on both sides of the LOC. The larger lesson here is that domestic political developments in these complex, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic states can have direct international consequences, especially since many of India's

and Pakistan's domestic political groups have links across the borders. The crisis was to some degree a military crisis, and a nuclear crisis, but its underlying cause lay in the domestic politics of both states.

Fourth, what precipitated the crisis of 1990? It was the movement of their military forces that were deemed most threatening by the other side, leading to a crisis atmosphere. The alarm raised in both countries over military movements effected in the other grew out of a combination of misperception, miscalculation, and worst-case analyses by all concerned. The failure of the Pakistani forces to return to their peacetime stations after the Zarb-i-Momin exercise was assessed by the Indian military as creating a military situation which positioned Pakistan's strike forces in locations from where they could launch offensive operations against India within a period of 24 to 48 hours. The Pakistani military officials claim that their troops returned within four weeks to their peacetime stations after the Zarb-i-Momin exercise, and that these maneuvers were held in a transparent manner far from the India–Pakistan border; this was very differently assessed by the Indians.

For their part, Pakistani military officials assessed the Indian tank movements in the Mahajan area as being indicative of the possible concentration of an Indian strike force, not far from the international border. The Indian military officials, on their part, believe that their "routine" tank exercises in their traditional exercise location in the Mahajan field ranges were only part of their annual training cycles and that tank units being rotated through Mahajan could not have been utilized for offensive operations. Thus each military establishment, while believing that their own actions were purely defensive in nature, were apprehensive about the military movements of the other side.

Fifth, was the crisis of 1990 imbued with a nuclear component and, more specifically, were nuclear weapons successful in deterring the conflict? This is a highly controversial issue. Indian interlocutors strongly denied that they had configured a nuclear threat from Pakistan into their estimations of its total military capabilities; hence the question of a nuclear threat from Pakistan did not enter their calculations. By 1990 both sides had undoubtedly acquired limited or primitive nuclear capabilities, but neither had a credible delivery system or a nuclear strategy or doctrine, and both sides doubted whether the other was nuclear capable in the sense of having an operational nuclear weapon; however, there was no conclusive evidence available to either of them that this was the correct assessment. Therefore, while remaining concerned with the possibility of a nuclear dimension intruding, neither side appears to have believed at that juncture that there was a serious likelihood of this occurring. This was the perception of the military and

intelligence community, but we have reason to believe that, on the Indian side, its political leaders were more alarmed. On the Pakistani side, senior military and political leaders were not unduly alarmed either, although Benazir's views are hard to determine, but in any case she was not central to Pakistani policy-making on the crisis itself. There were important differences also within the American policy and intelligence communities regarding the risk of war; but there was significant concern also that, even though the risk was small, an escalation to a conventional conflict might ultimately lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

Sixth, how did domestic politics exacerbate the crisis? As we have noted above, the underlying cause of the crisis was an uprising in Kashmir, but the two governments in India and Pakistan were minority governments, dependent on the support of different coalition partners. They had recently come into power and were constantly harassed by the need to deal with internal threats to their respective governments; so it could be reasonably assumed that their political leaderships were unable to make the necessary investment in time and effort to appreciate the problem brewing or take the remedial action necessary to defuse the crisis. Undoubtedly, on the Indian side, V. P. Singh had a great deal of experience in important positions in the state and central governments. The Indian bureaucracy, both civil and military, was fully in control of the administration and was not hesitant in using its powers to deal with the situation, even crises, as they arose. Compared to V. P. Singh, Benazir Bhutto was inexperienced both in leadership and administration. In addition, she was not fully in control of the crisis, because the two other members of the troika, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and General Aslam Beg, dominated Pakistan's crisis management apparatus.

Seventh, what was the role of the public statements made during the crisis? This was largely malefic, and deserves close scrutiny. Rhetorical excess and populist proclamations were indulged in at the highest levels on both sides. No doubt, Prime Ministers Singh and Bhutto, leading weak and unstable governments, needed to indulge in verbal pyrotechnics to meet any criticism of "softness" toward the adversary from their political opposition. That opposition came especially from right-wing parties, and in Pakistan's case, elements of the intelligence community. Bhutto's outbursts during her March 1990 tour of Kashmir and Singh's rhetoric in the Indian Parliament greatly added to heightening the tensions between the two countries. Paradoxically, indulgence in inflammatory rhetoric only made their position worse over the longer run. As perceptively noted by the Indian journalist, Shekhar Gupta:

"For Benazir the dilemma is: if she relents on Kashmir she is damned at home: if she does not she could be headed for a war she may not want."[1] Singh's position was similar. He needed to play up the Pakistani threat and its involvement in Kashmir to meet the criticism of the BJP and Congress Parties that he was not being sufficiently resolute. But, he too, did not want a purposeless conflict with Pakistan.

Eighth, what was the role played by the print and electronic media? This was notably incendiary, and was to reappear again in later crises. The radio had been extensively used for propaganda campaigns in 1971. Nearly twenty years later, during the 1990 crisis, the more powerful visual media was employed (film, television, and videotapes), especially by Pakistan, to whip up support for the militants in Kashmir, and to highlight the atrocities purportedly committed by the Indian forces. These programs were available to the population in the border states of India. Counter-measures of the same genre were then undertaken by India. These campaigns on radio and TV were easy to organize by the two countries as both these elements of the media were state-controlled at that time. In 1990, cable TV was not as extensively available as at present to offer a wider and more balanced fare to the viewer. The print media also served as a conduit for the public relations machinery of both governments, presenting a distorted image of the "Other." In India, this was easily achieved through the institution of several dozen "defense correspondents" accredited to the Ministry of Defense, who are dependent on it for tidbits of information. Consequently, they felt obliged to carry the handouts and leaks put out by the Ministry, lest they be excluded from this Government controlled information-dissemination regime. Despite its press being free, and the democratic form of governance being well established in India, information on national security is very selectively disseminated. The role of the so-called "defense correspondents" in exacerbating the 1990, earlier, and later crises is noteworthy.

Ninth, what was the role of the United States? Washington was constructively engaged in preventive diplomacy. This had two elements, one was the active diplomacy conducted by the two U.S. ambassadors in Islamabad and New Delhi, the other was the highly publicized Gates mission. The active role played by the ambassadors greatly helped India and Pakistan to avert a more serious crisis, as may have the Gates mission. It is a matter of conjecture, however, as to the extent to which the Gates mission was useful, depending on the appreciation whether the crisis had passed or was still lingering by the time he went to Islamabad and New Delhi. Its larger significance arises from the fact that it encouraged the negotiation and establishment of a series of

military CBMs between India and Pakistan shortly after the 1990 crisis abated.

How real was the threat of war?

The final and major question that has dogged this study – indeed all studies of the 1990 crisis – is how real was the threat of war? We have seen in an earlier chapter how American analysts tried to quantify the risk of war between India and Pakistan, placing it at less than 20 percent – still a very high figure for a conflict that had a potential to become nuclear. This figure was high enough to stimulate American diplomacy because nuclear weapons were involved – as was the case nine years later during the Kargil crisis, when the risk of war was stated to be even higher.

Yet few South Asians believed that the crisis of 1990 would progress into a full-fledged war. Despite the almost daily issue of bellicose speeches from both sides, the danger of war was never regarded as realistic. Four factors seem to have contributed toward the formulation of this view.

One is that internal political confusion in *both* countries was an effective check on what some outsiders considered a quick drift toward war. The same factor that precipitated the crisis paradoxically may have put a brake on its evolution into a military confrontation. For India the disturbed internal situation in Punjab and Kashmir discouraged a decision to contemplate a war with Pakistan. Wars are rarely won if the local population where the war is to be waged happen to be alienated if not completely hostile. This was definitely a factor three years earlier in the Brasstacks crisis, when Pakistan made a feint toward India's then rebellious Punjab state in response to a threatened Indian move toward the similarly restive Sind province. By 1990 India had a full-scale insurrection on its hands in Kashmir, and a still-unhappy Punjab; besides, both these states are physically situated on the borders of Pakistan. An equally important consideration for Pakistan was the then prevalent situation in Sindh. If war were contemplated it would need to be fought in only three sectors Kashmir, Punjab, and the Rajasthan–Sindh areas. Cognizant of India's strategic advantage in the Sindh–Rajasthan sector, Pakistani planners could not afford to leave it undefended. Behind these calculations, in both states, lay the memory of the Indian intervention in East Pakistan that led to the formation of Bangladesh. The empirical evidence reveals that war in South Asia has been linked to ethnic or regional separatism; in the case of 1990 (as in 1987) the vulnerabilities as well as the opportunities were mutual for both India and Pakistan.

Another factor that restrained both countries from plunging ahead into a major conflict was that both countries realized that war would wreck havoc on their economies. At that time both states were attempting to liberalize, privatize, and deregulate their economies to attract foreign investment. A war was not only likely to scare these investors, but would have adversely affected investments by likely new trading partners. However, ten years later the risk of economic backlash apparently did little to influence Pakistan's decisions that led to Kargil. Economic factors may influence foreign policy, but can be trumped by nationalism or strong security considerations.

Further, both India and Pakistan were uncertain about what diplomatic support they might receive from abroad if the crisis escalated. During the Cold War it was expected that the bloc leader would come to the assistance of its followers, but in the post-Cold War period the level of diplomatic support likely to be extended by friends was uncertain. A war was, in fact, likely to attract more condemnation than support. The leaders of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China were extremely reluctant to see another conflict in South Asia.

Finally, the existence of nuclear capabilities could not be ignored, although it does not appear to have been a determining factor in preventing a wider conflict. Not only were both countries known to have the wherewithal to manufacture nuclear weapons, they also possessed the rudimentary means to deliver at least a few weapons upon identified targets. When one is pushed to the wall, the emotive issue of survival provides full justification to employ all available means to avert destruction.

A combination of all these factors influenced the decision-makers on both sides to be wary of moving down the path of confrontation. Nevertheless, the leaders continued to play the game of brinkmanship, although with extreme caution and meticulous care, which, ostensibly, seemed to be aimed primarily at their domestic audiences.

As opposed to this regional view that war, including nuclear war, was unlikely, a case has been made out by those, especially Americans, who thought that war was very possible. Four factors are often cited here, which convinced many that not only would there be a fourth round, but that it could have escalated to the nuclear level.

First, both India and Pakistan had weak minority governments which were dependent upon their alliance partners.[2] Perhaps that is why one comes across rhetorical but incendiary statements by one side that there will be a "thousand-years war," and the retort that those boasting of a thousand-years war would not be able to survive a thousand hours of fighting. Such remarks were obviously aimed at impressing domestic constituencies.

Second, the media played the role of accelerating the crisis and contributing to the drift toward war. Neither the Pakistani nor the Indian press distinguished itself by their moderation; both were used by their respective governments to send "signals," not only to foreign governments, but to their own population. How could the Americans and others sort out the difference between an inflammatory statement generated for domestic consumption, and one whose target was the other country?

Third, the gap between the conventional capabilities of India and Pakistan was seen by some as a factor that could influence Pakistan to quickly – even pre-emptively – use its nuclear capabilities.

Finally, frustration over the inability by the international community to convince the two states to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty contributed to the suspicion that they had something to hide, and could be planning a surprise or sneak attack. Of course, this was exactly the view held by the Indian (and to a lesser extent, the Pakistani) leadership during much of the Cold War when Delhi urged others to join one or the other disarmament treaty. India was also suspicious of the intentions as well as the credentials of the nuclear weapon powers urging restraint upon India, while retaining and improving their own nuclear arsenals.

Toward the future

The invariable statement from scholars, administrators, bureaucrats, and others (including, at times, the authors) is that the leaders of India and Pakistan do not "trust" each other, or that there is a lack of trust which makes conflict resolution difficult. Alternatively, there is an often expressed view that leaders on the two sides "lack the will" to end these conflicts, or to deal with the "underlying causes" of regional crisis.

We regard these views as both wrong and patronizing. It seems to assume that the leaders of the region lack will power, integrity, or capability, and are doomed to stumble from near disaster to near disaster or go over the brink as happened in 1971 or in 1999. We take a different view. The crises of 1987 and 1990 were not caused by a lack of will, but by an excess of willfulness; they did not feature ignorant or reckless leaders, but very intelligent ones; these leaders did not display a lack of trust, indeed the idea of trusting the other side never occurred to them.

While the 1990 crisis derived from misperceptions of the adversary's actions, and misjudgments of his perceptions, and Kashmir was again the chief theater of tensions, these events were symptomatic of the enduring malaise that afflicts India–Pakistan relations, and of their long,

confrontational history. We reject the view that there was no crisis at all, and that outsiders played no significant role in helping to resolve it. Indeed, the role of outsiders can be seen, not so much in crisis averting, as crisis deferral, since the 1990 crisis followed upon, and was linked to, the Brasstacks crisis three years earlier, and was itself followed by a whole series of minor border skirmishes, culminating in the Kargil conflict that took place after both states had declared themselves to be nuclear weapons states.

Could the 1990 crisis have been averted if better *communications* had existed between the two military and political leaderships? Probably not. In contrast to the Brasstacks crisis, the communications between India and Pakistan were never disrupted. The Gujral–Yaqub Khan meetings maintained these contacts at very high political levels. The army hotlines continued to function between the Military Operations Directorates and, according to officers on both sides, they were not used to send misleading information, as they were during the Brasstacks crisis. There was some disruption, however, in the air-force hotlines. This is significant, because in the military context of 1990 it would have been the air forces of both states that would have been used to initiate the war by striking at the adversary's airfields. Apropos, mobilization of their respective armies would have been quickly detected by India, Pakistan, and outside powers.

It seems obvious to us that the establishment of confidence between adversarial nations requires a broad-based relationship involving a wide range of sectional interests. This could include legislators, academics, professionals, students, and so on. Promoting trade and commerce is very important for intermeshing bilateral relations. The exploitation and sharing of common resources like water or hydropower could also establish these mutual dependencies and strengthen the commitment to the confidence-building measures already emplaced.

As for Kashmir, the location and cause for the 1990 crisis, it has proven to be an enduring regional conundrum. The statistical record reveals that terrorist violence in Kashmir acquired serious proportions in 1989–90; but it grew steadily worse, thereafter, before peaking in 1993, culminating in the 1999 Kargil crisis and continuing thereafter till the time of this writing. This is established by the annual statistics of violent incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, their death toll, kidnappings by militants, and so on.[3] The tradition of minority and coalition governments, which obtained during this crisis, has embedded itself in India. Coalition governments are now a regular feature of Indian governance at this stage of its democratic evolution, whilst the military's influence on foreign policy – whether direct or indirect – seems to be a

lasting feature of Pakistan's politics. Government voices issue therefore from an "uncertain trumpet." The probability of future crises arising from a similar concatenation of circumstances points to the need to establish more institutionalized arrangements for dialog between the two governments to avert crises and to defuse them should they, nevertheless, occur.

One issue much discussed among diplomats, academics, foundation officials, and peace advocates is what is the most efficient way of promoting a dialog between the two states and removing the misunderstandings and misperceptions that were so important in this crisis in particular. Some have advocated private, high-level unofficial "Track II" diplomacy, wherein former government officials meet and report their discussions back to the respective governments. Others have disdain for these efforts, arguing that "people's diplomacy" featuring intellectuals and the "common man (or woman)" are the answer, on the grounds that the governments themselves are part of the problem, not part of the solution. There have also been calls, largely unheeded by both sides, for a greater flow of journalists, intellectuals, media persons, and cultural exchanges, and some have worked toward improving the contacts between the next generation of Indians and Pakistanis. Finally, it has often been pointed out that given the historical economic and physical links between the territories that now comprise India and Pakistan, that greater economic ties are important in providing a stabilizing ballast to the relationship.

Given that India and Pakistan are so far away from a normal relationship, and so crisis-prone, and given the importance of gross misperceptions in the relationship, the thinness of their acquisition of shared interests, and the presence in both countries of groups that do not want to have a better relationship at all, it is easy to answer the question posed by would-be peacemakers as to which of these steps are most important. They are *all* important. India and Pakistan will not have a normal relationship, let alone be able to avert future crises, until there is a strategic understanding between the two states, until gross (and systematically disseminated) distortions are reduced, and until real economic and social ties grow between them. Sadly, the crisis of 1990 was overtaken, and in some ways overshadowed, by the Kargil conflict, which itself was followed by a failed India–Pakistan summit in Agra in 1999 and then by the protracted crisis of 2001–2.[4] It seems to be a safe prediction that there will be future 1990s, future Brasstacks, and future Kargils, unless the faltering dialog between the two states on a wide range of vital issues advances with a greater sense of urgency and responsibility.

Notes

Introduction

1 The following is drawn from the summary of crisis and conflict in Richard N. Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 7–12.

2 These writings include Seymour M. Hersh, "On the Nuclear Edge," *New Yorker*, March 29, 1993; William E. Burrows and Robert Windrem, *Critical Mass: The Dangerous Race for Superweapons in a Fragmenting World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); Shirin Tahir–Kheli, *Lessons for the Future: The Gates Mission to India and Pakistan* (unpublished manuscript, 1994); Devin T. Hagerty, "Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: The 1990 Indo-Pakistani Crisis," *International Security*, 20 (Winter 1995–6); Devin T. Hagerty, *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: Lessons from South Asia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998); and Stephen P. Cohen, "1990: South Asia's Useful Nuclear Crisis," paper presented to the 1992 Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Chicago, February 6–7, 1992.

3 *Hearing of the Senate Government Affairs Committee*. Testimony by James Woolsey, director, Central Intelligence Agency, February 24, 1993, p. 2. Woolsey spoke long after the crisis, but his remarks, presumably prepared by his service, reflect the dominant opinion within the American intelligence community at the time.

4 Apart from reportage during the crisis period, namely spring 1990, the only retrospective accounts are an interview given by the then-incumbent chief of the army staff Gen. (ret.) V. N. Sharma, "It's All Bluff and Bluster," *The Economic Times* (New Delhi) May 18, 1993, an article by the then-incumbent Secretary to the Prime Minister, B. G. Deshmukh, "The Inside Story," *India Today*, February 28, 1994, and a brief, but thoughtful article by the Deputy Director of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, Commander Uday Bhaskar, "The May 1990 Nuclear Crisis: An Indian Perspective," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 20 (Oct.–Dec. 1997) pp. 317–32, which will be discussed later.

5 B.C. Chakravorty, *History of the Indo-Pak War, 1965* (New Delhi: Historical Division, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 1992), and the Hamoodur-Rahman Commission Report (1974 and other dates), available at http://www.bangla2000.com/bangladesh/Independence-War/Report-Hamoodur-Rahman/press-release.shtm

6 Kanti Bajpai, P. R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Stephen P. Cohen, and Sumit Ganguly, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Crisis Perception and Management in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995; Lahore: Vanguard Publishers, 1996; Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1996).
7 Hersh, "On the Nuclear Edge," and Mishi Faruqee and Michael Krepon, "Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis," Center Occasional Paper 17 (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1994) p. 6.
8 See Hagerty, *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation*.

1 The strategic context

1 For contemporaneous accounts see Rodney Jones on the end of the Cold War and South Asia ("Old Quarrels and New Realities: Security in Southern Asia After the Cold War," *Washington Quarterly* 15 (Winter 1992), pp. 105–28); also a piece by Sumit Ganguly ("South Asia After the Cold War," *The Washington Quarterly* 15 (Fall 1992), p. 173); Ross Munro ("The Loser: India in the 1990s," *The National Interest* 32 (Summer 1993), p. 62); and Sandy Gordon ("South Asia After the Cold War: Winners and Losers," *Asian Survey* 35 (1995), p. 879) on different estimates of the region and the impact on the region of the end of the Cold War; Chris Smith, *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal: Direction or Drift in Defense Policy?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Thomas P. Thornton, *U.S.–Pak, U.S.–Indian Relations after the Cold War*; also Peter Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace: The Cold War and the Struggle for the Third World* (New York: C. Scribner and Sons, 1994).
2 See "The End of History?" in *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989): pp. 3–18. For an expanded version see Fukuyama's subsequent book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
3 Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 1993), p. 324.
4 This was a crude effort by the Soviets to line up support for their invasion of Afghanistan. The Indian government and the Indian press, while strongly pro-Soviet, were unwilling to link India with the Soviet Asian initiative. See G. K. Reddy, "Brezhnev Unfolds New Asian Security Plan," *The Hindu*, December 20, 1980, for an account of a difficult meeting between Brezhnev and Indira Gandhi, then prime minister.
5 There was little support in India for the Gorbachev proposal, and some editorials criticized Gorbachev for failing to condemn Pakistan for threatening Indian security by its military build-up and nuclear activities. A year later as Exercise Brasstacks moved forward, the Soviets were to join the United States in urging restraint upon India. A typical Indian response to Gorbachev was: "It is one thing to be wary of President Reagan and Secretary Weinberger and quite another to slip into the slot reserved for India in Gorbachev's scheme of things to checkmate U.S. influence in Asia and the Pacific." *Sunday Observer*, November 26, 1986.
6 Richard Nations, "Moscow's New Tack," in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 14, 1986, pp. 30–4.
7 Mikhail Gorbachev's speech in Vladivostok, July 28, 1986, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), USSR National Affairs*, translated by Moscow Television Service, July 28, 1986.

8 I. K. Gujral, "India and the New Soviet World Outlook," reprinted in *India Today*, April 7, 1989.
9 Ibid.
10 Based on conversations by one of the authors in Islamabad in early 1990 with both Pakistani and American officials.
11 For analyses of the changing nature of Washington's links with Islamabad at the turn of the decade, see Thomas P. Thornton, "The New Phase in U.S.–Pakistani Relations," *Foreign Affairs* 89 (Summer 1989): 142–159; and Rodney W. Jones, "Pakistan and the United States: Partners After Afghanistan," *Washington Quarterly* 12 (Summer 1989): pp. 65–87.
12 For an analysis of this rapidly changing regional security environment, see Rodney W. Jones, "Old Quarrels and New Realities."

2 A region in turmoil on the eve of crisis

1 In January, 1990, just after the resolution of the Brasstacks crisis, the *New York Times*, January 23, 1990, carried a story suggesting that there had been malfeasance in the purchase of $1.4 billion worth of howitzers from the Swedish company, Bofors. While the deal was defended in parliament, contradictions in statements made by Rajiv Gandhi and his ministers eroded his popular support and led the opposition parties to launch personal attacks against him.
2 Congress was eager for revenge and eventually toppled the NF in early 1990 and, led by P. V. Narasimha Rao, went on to win the subsequent national election in 1991. Agents of the Sri Lankan separatist group, the LTTE, assassinated Rajiv Gandhi during the election campaign.
3 For an overview of India's entanglement in Sri Lanka see *Dilemmas of Indo-Sri Lankan Relations* (Colombo: Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, SWRD, 1991); Rajesh Kadian, *India's Sri Lanka Fiasco: Peace Keepers at War* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 1990); P. R. Chari, "The IPKF Experience in Sri Lanka," *ACDIS Occasional Paper* (Urbana, IL: Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security, 1994), and Depinder Singh, *The IPKF in Sri Lanka* (Noida, UP, India: Trishul Publications, 1991).
4 J. N. Dixit, *Anatomy of a Flawed Inheritance: Indo-Pak Relations*, 1970–1994 (Delhi: Konarak, 1995), p. 122.
5 Ibid., p. 123.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., pp. 127–8.
8 Subsequently, Benazir and Nawaz were to trade places twice, until Pakistan's enfeebled democracy – much damaged by the policies of both – was swept away by the army in a widely popular coup in October 1999.
9 Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 146.
10 Personal interview by one of the authors.
11 For a comprehensive Indian and Pakistani account of Simla, based upon interviews with many of the participants, see P. R. Chari and Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Simla Agreement 1972: Its Wasted Promise* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001).
12 IISS, *Strategic Survey, 1989–1990* (London: Brassey's for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1990), p. 166.

13 Dixit, pp. 124–5.
14 For a review of the "democratic peace" literature, see Steve Chan, "In Search of Democratic Peace: Problems and Promise," *Mershon International Studies Review* 41 (May 1997), pp. 59–91; and for an excellent summary, see Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 30–5.

3 Kashmir: from Simla to chaos

1 For the physical divisions of Kashmir, see S. M. Huda, "Economic Background of Kashmir," in *Pakistan Horizon*, 2 June, 1949; Robert Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and Its Resolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); and Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War and Hopes of Peace* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1997).
2 The official British designation glosses over some of the issues of sovereignty raised by these locutions and refers to "Indian-administered" and "Pakistan-administered" Kashmir.
3 For the text of the agreement, see Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers: A Political Review of British, Chinese, Indian, and Russian Rivalries* (New York: Praeger, 1969).
4 For the Pakistani perspective, see Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan, India, and Kashmir: A Historical Review," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia*, ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).
5 For a less-than-sympathetic discussion of the plight of the Pandits, see Sumanta Bose, *The Challenge in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Sage, 1997).
6 Sumit Ganguly, *Origins of War in South Asia: The Indo-Pakistani Conflict Since 1947*, second edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) and "Wars Without End? The Indo-Pakistani Conflict," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 541 (September 1995), pp. 167–78.
7 Ganguly, *Origins of War in South Asia*. Also see Raju Thomas, *Perspectives on Kashmir*, for varying perspectives on what happened in 1947–8.
8 Parenthetically, one of the authors (Cohen) met a British officer who was in service with the Pakistan army; he admitted that he had entered Kashmir subsequently with regular Pakistan army troops, although he and other British officers were ostensibly ordered to stay behind and let Pakistani officers do the fighting. The accusation that the United States was supportive of the separatists, and of Pakistan's intervention, is backed by no evidence whatsoever. At the time the United States was relatively disinterested in the region, and to the extent that it was engaged, it was to bring about a ceasefire and accommodation between the two successor states. See Dennis Kux, *Estranged Democracies: India and the United States, 1941–1991* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993). The first two chapters on the Roosevelt and Truman presidencies are significant.
9 See Cheema, in *Perspectives on Kashmir*.

10 The legality of Kashmir's accession has been questioned recently by scholars and officials in Britain and America and, of course, in Pakistan. A British scholar, Alastair Lamb, questioned the validity of the instrument of accession. Lamb raised many intriguing questions: was Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) invaded before the instrument of accession was signed? Did the Maharaja put off the signing and permit a reference to the instrument of accession? Did the ruler of the state ever sign the accession instrument? For details, see Alastair Lamb, *Birth of a Tragedy: Kashmir 1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 81–103. An American official, Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel, appeared to support this interpretation, but subsequent American silence on the issue made it unclear as to whether she was offering the official U.S. position or her personal interpretation.

11 See the original letters of both the Maharaja of Kashmir and the acceptance letter of Lord Mountbatten in Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 80–4.

12 In a telegram sent to the British prime minister, Nehru categorically stated initially that "the question of accession in any disputed territory or state must be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people and we adhere to this view." In a telegram sent to the Pakistani prime minister on October 28, 1947, Nehru once asserted that the accession of Kashmir is subject to reference to the people of the state and their decision. He further stated that India had no desire to impose any decision. In a broadcast to the nation in November 1947, Nehru once again emphasized that "We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given and the Maharaja has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir, but to the world. We will not and cannot back out of it." For details of repeated pledges, see *Documents on the Foreign Relations of Pakistan: The Kashmir Question*, ed. K. Sarwar Hasan (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1966), pp. 62–77.

13 G. W. Choudhury, *Pakistan's Relations with India 1947–1966* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), pp. 106–7.

14 Choudhri, Muhammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 300–1.

15 See S. M. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 29.

16 Choudhury, pp. 112–13.

17 See details of the ceasefire line in Robert Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and Its Resolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 61–8, 75–6.

18 Damodar R. Sardesai, "The Origins of Kashmir's International and Legal Status," in Raju G. C. Thomas, ed. *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

19 See, for instance, Saquib Yusuf's exasperated tone in "Why not 'Now'?" in *The Muslim*, January 7, 1990. He writes: "Strangest of all, the Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front finds that Pakistan is a threat to his country's national identity, just as India is to his Islamic identity."

20 For a brief UN history of the conflicts in Kashmir plus information about the UN peacekeeping operations in the state, see the web site of the United

Nations Department of Public Information, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) October 31, 1997. Available at http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unmogip.htm.

21 India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute, p. 190.

22 Stephen P. Cohen, "U.S.–Soviet Cooperation in South Asia," in Roger Kanet and Edward Kolodziej, eds., *The Cold War as Cooperation* (London: Macmillan, 1990, and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

23 Even Pakistanis accept the proposition that Kashmiris themselves seemed unwilling to join Pakistan. See D. Z. Haq, writing a Forum piece in *The Muslim*, January 17, 1990. He quotes President Ayub Khan as commenting on Indian "repression" in Kashmir: "Yes, but when are Kashmiris themselves going to do something about it?" He further adds that when Ayub Khan, under pressure from foreign minister Bhutto, permitted armed commandos to enter the Valley, "they met with little success, receiving almost no local help."

24 Brig A. Haroon, *Kashmir Battles of 1948–1965–1971 and Ongoing Freedom Struggle* (Lahore: 1995), p. 116.

25 For detailed analyses of the Simla agreement by the two co-authors of this book, see P. R. Chari and Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Simla Agreement*, 1972 (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001).

26 For the texts of various documents and statements associated with the Simla summit, see Chari and Cheema, *The Simla Agreement*, pp. 191ff.

27 Just before his arrest by the military in Pakistan, Bhutto prepared a special White Paper setting forth the Pakistani position on Kashmir. See Government of Pakistan, *White Paper on the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute* (Islamabad: Ministry of External Affairs, January, 1977). Besides attacking Ayub Khan for his inept diplomacy at Tashkent, the White Paper has a useful interpretation of the text of the Simla Agreement, setting forth the Pakistani understanding of what the text means on Kashmir.

28 In 1984 Indian forces assumed a dominant position on the Siachin Glacier, but the line that separated the two forces in that region of Kashmir had not been determined.

29 Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema "The Kashmir Dispute and Peace of South Asia," *Regional Studies* XV (Winter 1996–7), pp. 170–88.

30 In 1964, at Nehru's insistence, Abdullah went to Pakistan to have talks with the leaders in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir (or Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as India calls it). The visit remained inconclusive as Abdullah had to rush back to New Delhi on receiving the news of Nehru's death on May 27, 1964.

31 National Conference leaders G. M. Sadiq and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, for instance, preferred to remain with India. See Pran Chopra, *MAG*, October 19–25, 1989.

32 Khurshid Ahmed Mir, "Held Kashmir: Resistance and Liberation from India," *Nation*, November 3, 1989.

33 According to Chopra, Sheikh Abdullah had spent twenty years in custody. For nine years he had been in prison, then externed from the state, the remainder he spent under house arrest. Not once did Abdullah think of moving to Pakistan (*MAG*, 1989).

34 Ibid. Chopra further writes that the conditions of the Abdullah–Gandhi accord were straightforward: the sheikh would drop his demand for a plebiscite (he had been asking for it since his incarceration in 1953) and accept Jammu and Kashmir accession to India. In return, if the Kashmir state assembly voted for it, the title of the chief executive of Kashmir could revert back to prime minister (after 1953, the title had been downgraded to chief minister). Also, if the assembly voted for it, Srinagar could ask for the repeal of certain provisions that had eroded the state's special status under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The state assembly took neither step. The agreement, however, fell apart quickly under pressure of local politics between the National Conference and the Congress. According to Chopra, Abdullah also reacted to the presence of the anti-Article 370 BJP in the new Janata government in New Delhi. On May 23, 1977, Abdullah threatened to return to his prior demands "if we are not assured a place of honor and dignity in terms of the safeguards provided under Article 370."

35 Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antinomies of Nationalism," *Asian Survey* 31 (November 1991), p. 1014.

36 M. J. Akbar, *Kashmir: Behind the Vale* (New Delhi: Viking, 1991), pp. 202–4.

37 The existing governor, B. K. Nehru (a distinguished member of the Nehru family), refused to carry out Delhi's command to get rid of Farooq. He was replaced by Jagmohan who was a loyal member of Indira's circle from the time he was lieutenant-governor in Delhi during the 1975–7 emergency and who, working for Gandhi's son, Sanjay, facilitated the "efficient," if brutal, administration of that state.

38 W. H. Morris-Jones, "India After Indira: A Tale of Two Legacies," *Third World Quarterly* 7 (April 1985), p. 248.

39 Akbar, *Behind the Vale*, p. 207.

40 For an outside characterization of conditions in Kashmir during this period, see Asia Watch, *Kashmir Under Siege: Human Rights in India* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1991).

41 Inderjit Badhwar, "A Tarnished Triumph," *India Today*, April 15, 1987, pp 76–8; and "Farooq Under Fire," *India Today*, September 15, 1987, pp. 42–7.

42 Akbar, *Behind the Vale*, p. 213.

43 The Kashmiri elites were always believed to be corrupt and nepotistic. Some observers estimate that more than 90 percent of the wealth in the state is in the hands of fewer than 200 families. For instance, see Rajesh Kadian, *The Kashmir Tangle: Issues and Options* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) and Tavleen Singh, *Kashmir: A Tragedy of Errors* (New Delhi: Viking, 1995). Given Farooq's lack of mandate, however, the corruption and inefficiency became politically significant. It allowed extremist opposition groups to come together against Farooq. See Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes for Peace* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1997).

44 While there has been much attention paid to the alienation of younger members of the National Conference, there is some evidence that senior members were equally disillusioned. In 1986 one senior National Conference official holding a government position made contact with at least one Western power, asking it to support a separatist movement. These feelers

were (to our knowledge) firmly rejected, but they may indicate considerable alienation from New Delhi within the older generation of Kashmiri leaders, or perhaps their sensitivity to the pressure from a younger generation, which was more vocal and active in their discontent with the merger with Congress and the continuation of corrupt politics-as-usual in the Valley.

45 Sumit Ganguly, "Avoiding War in Kashmir," *Foreign Affairs* 74 (Winter 1990–1), p. 64.

46 See editorial in *The Muslim*, January 21, 1990. It states: "It goes without saying that no government in Pakistan, all the more so an elected one and thus inherently more responsive to popular feelings, can keep itself aloof from the kind of attachment the people of this country have with their brethren in occupied Kashmir."

47 Wirsing, *India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute* pp. 128–9.

48 This description is from Inderjit Badhwar, "Kashmir: Valley of Tears" in *India Today*, May 31, 1989, pp. 34–43.

49 Ibid. This description is from the same source.

50 Ved Marwah, *Uncivil Wars: Pathology of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), p. 60.

51 Ibid., p. 76.

52 "Indianise Kashmir," *India Today*, September 30, 1989, p. 11.

53 This particular kidnapping was very controversial, even among the militants. They were criticized by many Muslim leaders for having committed a most un-Islamic act by putting an innocent woman at risk. In the end she was released unharmed.

54 *Asia Watch* (New York); *Kashmir Under Siege: Human Rights in India* (New York: Human Rights Watch, May 1991), p. 13.

55 Later in the year, in July 1990, "President's rule" replaced "Governor's rule."

56 About the same time, on January 21, 1990, Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahibzada Yaqub Khan left for New Delhi ostensibly to convince India that the rebellion in Kashmir was truly indigenous. This important visit will be discussed later in Chapter 4. See Sikander Hayat, "Pakistan's Diplomatic Offensive on Kashmir," *Frontier Post*, January 22, 1990. New Delhi was also making statements about the "grave miscalculation" of aiding and abetting the uprising in Kashmir.

57 *India Today*, June 30, 1990, p. 71.

58 Marwah, pp. 78–9.

59 Ibid., p. 85.

60 Ibid., p. 88.

61 Ibid., pp. 96–7.

62 Ibid., p. 86.

63 Ibid., pp. 91–2.

64 Ibid., p. 98.

65 Ibid., p. 99.

66 Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir*, p. 108.

67 For instance, see editorial in *The Muslim*, January 21, 1990: "It was, therefore, only proper that a high-level meeting chaired by the President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in Islamabad on Saturday (January 20, 1990) took stock of the situation in the occupied territory and of the way it could

affect Pakistan's national interests in the days ahead." Further, Pakistani National Assembly speaker, Malik Miraj Khalid, warned against being too belligerent on Kashmir so as not to provide India with a pretext, presumably, of crossing the international border as it had done in 1965. See *The Muslim*, January 27, 1990.

68 The Indian general responsible for creating the Siachen problem in the first place has discussed his actions publicly, and with some sense of regret. He apparently acted without full authority. See Lieutenant General M. L. Chibber, "Siachen – The Untold Story (A Personal Account)," *Indian Defence Review*, January 1990, pp. 89–95.

69 Robert G. Wirsing "The Kashmir Conflict," *Current History* 95 (April 1996), pp. 171–6.

70 Quoted in A. G. Noorani, "CBMs for the Siachen Glacier, Sir Creek and the Wular Barrage," in *Crisis Prevention, Confidence Building, and Reconciliation in South Asia*, eds. Michael Krepon and Amit Sevak (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 81.

71 *Asian Recorder*, January 1–7, 1973, 11159, citing the *Times of India*, the *Hindustan Times*, and *Radio Pakistan*.

72 Robert G. Wirsing, *Strategic Studies* (Islamabad: The Institute of Strategic Studies) 41 (Autumn 1988). Also see Robert G. Wirsing, *Pakistan's Security Under Zia 1977–88: The Policy Imperatives of a Peripheral Asian State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 143–94.

73 Lieutenant General M. L. Chibber, "Siachen – The Untold Story," pp. 89–95.

74 Noorani, "CBMs for the Siachen Glacier, Sir Creek and the Wular Barrage," p. 81.

75 Chibber, "Siachen – The Untold Story," pp. 87–88.

76 See Robert Wirsing, *India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute*, pp. 204–6.

77 For a full description of the Wular Barrage issue, see Noorani in Krepon and Sevak, pp. 94–100.

78 For representative views at this time, see chapters by Noor A. Husain, P. R. Chari, Lt-Gen. Eric Vas, M. B. Naqvi, R. R. Subramaniam, Lieut-Gen. A. I. Akram, Jagat Mehta, and K. Subrahmanyam in *The Security of South Asia: Asian and American Perspectives*, ed. Stephen Philip Cohen (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1987). Kashmir is barely mentioned, as proliferation and Afghanistan-related issues dominate the analyses. Most of the Pakistanis argued that the Soviet threat and Indian hegemonic aspirations were the leading cause of regional insecurity: none (including several retired generals) argued that Kashmir was the central problem between India and Pakistan. On the Indian side, few commentators bothered with Kashmir, and those that did, such as K. Subrahmanyam, wrote as if the Simla Agreement had preserved peace for twelve years and would continue indefinitely. During the conference, at which initial drafts of the chapters were presented, one of the authors suggested that Kashmir was *not* a subject of great contention between the two states and should be resolved. This was firmly rejected by Indians and Pakistanis alike.

79 Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir*, pp. 36–7.

80 The works of the fine Kashmiri anthropologist, T. N. Madan, who has devoted his life to the study of Kashmiri society, are uniquely valuable. See

T. N. Madan, *Family and Kinship: A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); *Muslim Communities of South Asia: Culture, Society, and Power* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995); and *Culture and Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

81 On the other hand, some Indian officials argue that the Kashmiris remain Kashmiris: easily cowed, and certainly more vulnerable to threat and pressure than others. Some in the Indian police (usually Punjabis) have offered the observation that a Kashmiri "militant" will crack under torture far more quickly than his Punjabi equivalent.

82 The classic expression of this position is by Jagmohan, who served (twice) as governor of Jammu and Kashmir. His memoir-analysis, *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Allied, 1991) is a monumental defense of his own role in these events, but also contains much useful information and some misinformation about events in New Delhi, Kashmir, and Pakistan.

83 *India Today*, June 30, 1990, p. 71.

84 Inderjit Badhwar, "Asserting Authority," *India Today*, February 28, 1990, p. 31.

85 Marwah, pp. 76–7.

86 See Pankaj Pachauri and Zafar Meraj, "Drifting Dangerously," *India Today*, January 15, 1990, pp. 8–13; and Shekhar Gupta, "Militant Siege," *India Today* (international edition) January 31, 1990, pp. 30–7.

87 "Kashmir: Echoes of War," *The Economist*, January 27, 1990, p. 33; "Kashmir: Fighting Words," *The Economist*, February 3, 1990, p. 32.

88 Gupta, "Militant Siege," p. 34.

89 Ganguly, *Crisis in Kashmir*.

90 For a U.S. account of the damage to the Third World caused by the Cold War – written by one of the leading U.S. strategists of the Cold War – see Peter Rodman, *More Precious than Peace: The Cold War and the Struggle for the Third World* (New York: C. Scribner and Sons, 1994).

91 For a detailed and systematic analysis of steps undertaken by India to erode the special status of Kashmir, see Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "India's Kashmir Policy" in *Perspectives on Kashmir*, ed. Dr. K. F. Yusuf (Islamabad: Pakistan Forum, 1994), pp. 97–108.

4 From domestic insurgency to international concern

1 Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee, eds., "Conflict Prevention and Confidence-Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis," Occasional Paper No. 17 (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, April 1994), p. 5. This is the transcript of a meeting convened by the Stimson Center to discuss the 1990 crisis. Participants included the U.S. ambassadors to New Delhi and Islamabad in 1990 and several South Asian diplomats and military officers.

2 But even among the Indian experts there was (and remains) a wide difference of opinion as to the strategy most appropriate to contain and eliminate the separatist *cum* terrorist movement.

3 See, for example, "The Enemy Within," *India Today* (editorial), March 31, 1990, p. 11; Sumit Ganguly, "Avoiding War in Kashmir," *Foreign*

Affairs 74 (Winter 1990–1) pp. 63, 65; M. J. Akbar, *Kashmir: Behind the Vale* (New Delhi: Viking, 1991), p. 215; "Crossfire: Kashmir," *India Today*, August 31, 1991, pp. 77–87; George Fernandes, "India's Policies in Kashmir: An Assessment and Discourse," and Jagat Mehta, "Resolving Kashmir in the International Context of the 1990s," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia*, ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview, 1992), pp. 286, 394–5; and Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846–1990* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 332, 340.

4 Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis," p. 6.

5 J. N. Dixit, *Anatomy of a Flawed Inheritance: Indo-Pak Relations, 1970–1994* (Delhi: Konarak, 1995), p. 125.

6 This is ex-governor Jagmohan's viewpoint; he discusses at great length, as evidence of Pakistani subversive intentions, "Operation Topac." This was, allegedly, a systematic Pakistani effort to infiltrate and suborn the ranks of the Valley Kashmiris; Jagmohan's discussion cites verbatim statements by Zia and other senior Pakistani leaders *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Allied, 1991), pp. 406ff. He does acknowledge some doubts about the origins of Topac (p. 410), and concludes that it is "immaterial whether such a plan was conceived and executed by Pakistani agencies or it was merely a model or scenario worked out by the Research and Analysis Wing or any other branch of the Indian government." In fact, it was the latter, although Jagmohan is correct in surmising that there were Pakistani plans afoot. The real question is whether Indian decisions were influenced by disinformation operations mounted by the Indian government itself – in intelligence parlance, a "blowback." The first public presentation of Topac appears in the *Indian Defense Review*, July 1989, although the article does not make it clear that Topac was an entirely fictional exercise – among other things the operation's name does not conform with the Pakistani practice of giving its operations and exercises Western or Islamic titles. See also the discussion by K. Subrahmanyam that relies upon the scenario, "Kashmir," *Strategic Analysis*, May 1990, pp. 98–111, and Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War and Hopes of Peace* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 15.

7 Ibid.

8 *India Today*, January 31, 1990.

9 These talks about the terms and extent of support broke down. The first group of four Kashmiris apparently went across to Pakistan for training some time in 1987 after they were released from an Indian jail. They claim to have spoken with Zia on that trip. There have been some reports that there were contacts between dissident Sikhs and the Kashmiris in Pakistan, concerning joint operations in Jammu.

10 B. G. Deshmukh, "The Inside Story," *India Today*, February 28, 1994, p. 62.

11 Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Lessons for the Future: The Gates Mission to India and Pakistan" (unpublished manuscript), p. 6.

12 Ibid.

13 Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis," p. 6.

14 One of the first reports of these conversations is in Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). Indian

intelligence officials questioned the author about this passage shortly afterward. By the mid-1990s official Pakistan military journals were publishing articles with elaborate scenarios of nuclear war fighting and deterrence between India and Pakistan. We will return to this issue in Chapter 6.

15 *India Today*, February 28, 1990.
16 *India Today*, January 31, 1990.
17 Malcolm Davidson, "Bhutto Says Pakistan Does Not Want War With India Over Kashmir," *Reuters Library Report*, February 10, 1990.
18 Personal communication.
19 Interview.
20 Typically, see "Mission to Delhi" (editorial), *The Muslim*, January 9, 1990.
21 *The Muslim*, January 11, 1990.
22 Interview.
23 It might be pointed out here, at the anecdotal level, that Benazir Bhutto's second child was born in mid-January 1990.
24 Quoted in Tariq Butt, "Comment," *The Muslim*, January 25, 1990.
25 Shekhar Gupta, "Nuclear Weapons in the Subcontinent," in *Defense and Insecurity in Southern Asia: The Nuclear and Conventional Dimensions, Occasional Paper 21*, ed. Chris Smith, Shekhar Gupta, William J. Durch, and Michael Krepon (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1995), p. 39.
26 Syed Rifaat Hussain, "Benazir's Downfall: The International Dimension," *The News*, August 10, 1991. Hussain is a leading Pakistani academic who served a brief tour in the Pakistan embassy in Washington during Benazir Bhutto's second term as prime minister.
27 Ibid.
28 Based on interviews in Pakistan.
29 Based on interviews in India.
30 Based on interviews in India with several participants in these events.
31 The quasi-official Indian report on the Kargil war makes some reference to these talks, but its text draws no inferences, although the public version of the report is heavily edited. See *Report of the Kargil Review Committee: From Surprise to Reckoning* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), p. 65.
32 Hussain, *Frontier Post*, January 29, 1990.
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34 Sikander Hayat, "Vigilant Eyes on Kashmir Control Line," *Frontier Post*, January 29, 1990.
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37 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 17, 1990, p. 11.
38 The *Xinhua General Overseas News Service*, February 21, 1990.
39 S. Viswam and Salamat Ali, "Vale of Tears," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 8, 1990, pp. 19–21.
40 Raja Asghar, "Bhutto Predicts Victory for Kashmir Independence Campaign," *Reuters Library Report*, March 13, 1990.
41 Interview with official, then posted in Islamabad.
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Committee: From Surprise to Reckoning (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), p. 66.

43 Interview.

44 Moses Manoharan, "Indian Leader Tells Pakistan to Stay Out of Kashmir Uprising," *Reuters Library Report*, March 13, 1990.

45 "Crush Pak Camps: BJP," *Times of India*, April 8, 1990.

46 David Housego, "India Urged to Attack Camps in Pakistan Over Strife in Kashmir," *Financial Times*, April 9, 1990.

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48 Interview with a senior Pakistan army officer, who notes that plans to assist the Kashmiris developed after the uprising in Kashmir, not before.

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50 "Unwarranted Bellicosity," *Dawn* (Karachi), April 12, 1990.

51 See "Conflict Prevention," Krepon and Faruqee, pp. 17–22.

52 "Indian Threats Demand Vigilance," *Dawn* (Karachi), April 12, 1990; James Clad and Salamat Ali, "Will Words Lead to War?" *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 26, 1990, pp. 10–11; Malcolm Davidson, "Pakistan Condemns Indian Premier's Talk of War Over Kashmir," *Reuters Library Report*, April 11, 1990; Malcolm Davidson, "Kashmir Row Sparks Dangerous Period for India and Pakistan," *Reuters Library Report*, April 13, 1990; "Pakistan Ready to Meet Indian Invasion, Minister Says," *Reuters Library Report*, April 14, 1990.

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56 *Economic Times*, May 18, 1993.

57 Gen. (ret.) V. N. Sharma, "It's All Bluff and Bluster," *Economic Times* (Bombay), May 18, 1993.

58 Interview with a very senior Pakistani military official.

59 Devin Hagerty's chapter on "Nuclear Weapons and the Kashmir Crisis" in *The Theory and Practice of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1995), pp. 217–80.

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71 *The Nation*, October 21, 1989.
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73 Based on contemporaneous interviews with a number of mid-level Pakistan army officers at this time.
74 Sharma, "Bluff and Bluster."
75 Comments of the U.S. ambassador to New Delhi, William Clark, in Krepon and Faruqee, "1990 Crisis," p. 3.
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77 *Washington Post*, April 14, 1990.
78 Personal interview.
79 Sharma, "Bluff and Bluster."
80 Deshmukh, "The Inside Story."
81 Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis."
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84 Davidson, "Dangerous Period for India and Pakistan."
85 Steve Coll, "Indian Troops, Separatist Violence Aggravate Kashmir Crisis," *Washington Post*, April 13, 1990.
86 *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1990, p. 47.
87 Ibid.
88 Mark Fineman, "The Makings of a Bloody, Old-Fashioned War," *The Economist*, April 21, 1990, p. 35.
89 Ibid.
90 Steve Coll, "Assault on Pakistan Gains Favor in India," *Washington Post*, April 15, 1990.
91 Mark Fineman, "India's Leader Warns of an Attack by Pakistan," *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1990, A7; "Indian Forces Battle Moslems in Kashmir," *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 1990.

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100 Ali, “Avoiding Action,” p. 26.
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103 Krepon and Faruqee, “The 1990 Crisis,” p. v.
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107 Statement made by Lt Col. Davis. Krepon and Faruqee, “1990 Crisis,” p. 15.
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110 Yojana Sharma “China: Fears of Separatism Sharpen,” *Inter Press Service*, February 21, 1990; Shekhar Gupta, “Turning Down the Heat,” *India Today*, May 15, 1990; Deshmukh, “The Inside Story.”
111 *UPI*, April 18, 1990.
112 White House Background Briefing by Senior Administration Official, *Federal News Service*, May 24, 1990.

113 *Times of India*, April 8, 1990; *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 1990; *Washington Post*, April 18, 1990.
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116 *Reuters Library Report*, April 19, 1990.
117 *Daily Telegraph*, April 19, 1990.
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5 America's deepening engagement

1 For the announcement of the mission see, "Regional Issues in the Upcoming U.S.–Soviet Summit," *White House Background Briefing*, Federal News Service, May 24, 1990.
2 Reported in the *Washington Post*, April 18, 1997. Also see Al Kamen, "U.S. Voices Concern Over Kashmir," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1990.
3 *The Muslim*, January 7, 1990.
4 *Indian Express*, May 20, 1990.
5 *Washington Post*, April 18, 1990, citing Robert M. Kimmit, under-secretary of state.
6 See, for example, the story by a well-informed Pakistani academic, Syed Riffat Hussain, "Benazir's Downfall: The International Dimension," *The News*, August 10, 1991.
7 Devin Hagerty, "Nuclear Weapons and the Kashmir Crisis," in *Theory and Practice of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia* (University of Pennsylvania, 1995), pp. 261–2.
8 *The Muslim*, May 17, 1990. See also, Chicago Tribune, May 17, 1990.
9 *The Hindu*, May 17, 1990.
10 Ibid.
11 M. Ziauddin, "U.S. Envoy Holds Talks on Kashmir," *United Press International*, May 20, 1990.
12 Seymour M. Hersh, "On the Nuclear Edge," *New Yorker*, March 29, 1993, 67–8; comments of Oakley and the U.S. ambassador to New Delhi, William Clark, in "Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis," Occasional Paper 17 ed. Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee (Washington, D.C.: The Henry Stimson Center, 1994), pp. 4, 8–9; John F. Burns, "U.S. Urges Pakistan to Settle Feud With India Over Kashmir," *New York Times*, May 21, 1990. Pakistani officials later denied that they agreed to shut down any training camps.
13 Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis," p. 8.
14 Hersh, p. 67.
15 Interview.
16 *The Hindu*, May 21, 1990.
17 Interviews in Islamabad and other cities in 1990.
18 *UPI*, May 16, 1990.
19 *The Muslim*, May 18, 1990. Almost ten years later, after India conducted a series of nuclear weapons tests, Advani, then minister for home affairs, repeated the threat. Various interpretations have been put upon the latter,

one being that the Indian government was trying to pressure Pakistan to test and that Advani's threat was calculated to produce this result.

20 Ramanna was brought into the V. P. Singh government because of Singh's desire to include a number of scientists and technocrats. He was also associated with the earlier (1974) nuclear test. *Reuters Library Report*, May 17, 1990.

21 B. G. Deshmukh, "The Inside Story," *India Today*, February 28, 1994, p. 62.

22 Hersh, p. 68, Krepon and Faruqee, "1990 Crisis," p. 4; "The Killing of Hopes for Peace in Kashmir," *Economist*, May 26, 1990.

23 Interview with former senior Bush administration official.

24 *Daily Telegraph*, May 22, 1997.

25 *India Today*, June 15, 1990.

26 Quoted in Hagerty. Also see the *Daily Telegraph*, May 22, 1997.

27 It has subsequently been disclosed that later in 1990 the two sides agreed to keep quiet about a major cross border conflict, even though it had involved some casualties and movement of territory back and forth between the two sides in Kashmir itself. Gen. (ret.) Mirza Aslam Beg, "Let History Judge," *The News* (Islamabad), October 15, 1998. For an Indian response, confirming that Pakistan had made incursions across the Line of Control in 1990, see *Deccan Herald*, October 23, 1998.

28 Based on communication from one of the Indian participants at the Gates meetings in New Delhi.

29 *Xinhua General News Service*, June 3, 1990.

30 *Times of India*, June 8, 1990.

31 Based on personal interviews.

32 Devin Hagerty, *Theory and Practice of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia*, p. 15.

33 *Newsweek*, June 4, 1990. Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis," and *U.S. News & World Report*, June 11, 1990.

34 Robert M. Gates, "Preventive Diplomacy: Concept and Reality," excerpts from a speech to a "Conference on Preventive Diplomacy" held in Taipei, Taiwan, August 29, 1996, Center for Strategic and International Studies Pacific Forum, PacNet No. 39, September 27, 1996.

35 Robert M. Gates, "The CIA's Little-Known Resume," *New York Times*, October 29, 1998.

36 Burrows and Windrem, *Critical Mass*, pp. 16–17.

37 "Regional Issues in the Upcoming U.S.–Soviet Summit," *White House Background Briefing*, Federal News Service, May 24, 1990.

38 Adams, "Pakistan 'Nuclear War Threat'"; see also, Landay, "U.S. Diplomatic Mission Fails," *United Press International*, May 21, 1990; and Balram Tandon, "Delhi Rejects Bush Plan for Peace Talks," *Daily Telegraph*, May 22, 1990.

39 Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis," p. 4.

40 Ibid., pp. 30–1.

41 Ibid., pp. 20, 30–3.

42 Interview.

43 Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis."

44 *The Muslim*, May 17, 1990.

45 *Japan Times*, May 1, 1990.

46 *Dawn*, May 3, 1990.

6 1990 as a nuclear crisis

1 Seymour Hersh, "On the Nuclear Edge," *New Yorker*, March 29, 1993, and William E. Burrows and Robert Windrem, *Critical Mass: The Dangerous Race for Superweapons in a Fragmenting World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

2 Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).

3 The most comprehensive survey of the Indian program is in George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); for a cultural/interpretative account of the Indian nuclear program, see Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State* (New York: Zed Books, 1998).

4 For a Pakistani journalist's account of the program, based on interviews with many key participants, see Shahid-ur-Rahman, *Long Road to Chagai* (Islamabad: Print-Wise Publications, 1999). For a survey of the Pakistani program, see Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (revised edition: Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

5 Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, "Deterrence against Aggression," Chapter 16 in *The Myth of Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

6 See Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, pp. 153, 155.

7 According to one informed Pakistani military source, the idea of "strategic defiance" came from the ISI Director, Lt-Gen. Hamid Gul, as the Afghan war began to wind down. The term was picked up by the army chief, Gen. Aslam Beg. Gul looked to Central Asia, Beg looked to Kashmir; in the end both were stymied.

8 This is one conclusion reached by Shirin Tahir-Kheli in an unpublished paper, 1994.

9 For two comprehensive studies of poll data, especially commissioned for the purpose, see David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, eds., *India and the Bomb: Public Opinion and Nuclear Options* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), and David Cortright and Samina Ahmed, eds., *Pakistan and the Bomb: Public Opinion and Nuclear Options* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998).

10 Deshmukh was cabinet secretary in 1990. See his *A Cabinet Secretary Looks Around* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1998).

11 Raj Chengappa, *Weapons of Peace* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2000), p. 357.

12 K. Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964–98 (A Personal Recollection)," in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Nuclear India* (New Delhi: Knowledge World and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, 1998), p. 44.

13 Ibid., p. 45.

14 *Report of the Kargil Review Committee: From Surprise to Reckoning* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 66, 73, 193. According to the authors, the RAW report cited highly placed sources from an un-named country to the effect that Pakistan "would attempt to hit one or two targets in India with nuclear weapons at the very commencement of *any* armed conflict." While it could be that Pakistani strategic policy had changed from April–May to August, we find no evidence to indicate that such a first-strike doctrine had been adapted by Pakistan, at least with

reference to *any* armed conflict. At that time Pakistani strategists were discussing several options for nuclear use under a variety of circumstances.

15 George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 293. He also states that by then Pakistan, also, had acquired the capability to assemble nuclear weapons. Perkovich cites an article by Subrahmanyam, "Politics of Shakti," *Times of India*, May 26, 1998, but it is not clear whether this refers to Pakistan and India's capabilities or the planned Indian response. Perkovich describes the formation of a small, secret, group to develop plans for ensuring that in the event of a nuclear attack on India the government would continue to function and would be able to retaliate. The group was proposed by the Scientific Advisor to the Minister of Defense, V.S. Arunachalam, and included himself, R. Chidambaram of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, Arun Singh (former Minister of State for Defense), General K. Sundarji, who had just retired, and a few others including K. Subrahmanyam. The committee did not include India's service chiefs, and worked out an arrangement by which base commanders and scientists would be ordered to carry out a retaliatory attack should the top civilian and military leadership be wiped out in a nuclear attack.

16 Shahid-ur-Rahman, *Long Road to Chagai*. The author had access to many of the key personnel in the weapons and missile programs; references to the M-11 program were, according to the author, "expunged" and other sections were deleted because of political sensitivity; the book contains many inaccuracies, but it is hard to tell whether these are the responsibility of the author or those he talked to.

17 Ibid., pp. 82–3.

18 Dawn, June 27, 2001.

19 For a comprehensive narrative history of the evolution of Indian nuclear thinking, see Perkovich, and also W. P. S. Sidhu, "The Development of an Indian Nuclear Doctrine Since 1998," Dissertation submitted to the Degree Committee of the Faculty of History for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, February 1997. Also see Kanti P. Bajpai and Amitabh Mattoo, *Security India: Strategic Thought and Practice, Essays by George K. Tanham with Commentaries* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996). For a discussion of Pakistani nuclear thought, see Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, pp. 152ff., and a flurry of recent articles in Pakistani military journals.

20 The term strategic enclave was coined by Itty Abraham and further developed by George Perkovich. See Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State* (New York: Zed Books, 1998), and George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

21 From the hawkish Indian perspective that India could have "taken out" Pakistan's weak nuclear capabilities some time in the 1980s, but since this opportunity was lost (it could not have been done in any case without great cost) Pakistan's program was the perfect justification to lever an Indian program from a reluctant Indian leadership.

22 Josef Korbel, p. 272.

23 Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, p. 154.

24 Ibid.

25 Kuldip Nayar interview with Pakistani nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan, *The Observer*, March 1, 1987; President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq in "Knocking at the Nuclear Door," *Time*, March 30, 1987.
26 K. Subrahmanyam, "Capping, Managing, or Eliminating Nuclear Weapons?" In *South Asia After the Cold War*, ed. Kanti P. Bajpai and Stephen P. Cohen (Boulder: Westview, 1993), p. 184.
27 *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: Lessons from South Asia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 167–8.
28 Abdul Sattar, "Reducing Nuclear Dangers in South Asia," *Regional Studies* (Islamabad) 8 (Winter 1994–5), p. 9.
29 Ibid., p. 3.
30 See "Ex-President Discusses Nuclear Program, Politics," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, Near East and South Asia*, July 26, 1993, pp. 69–71; and "General Beg Claims Country Conducted 'Cold' Nuclear Test," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, Near East and South Asia*, August 3, 1993, p. 56.
31 "General Mirza Aslam Beg's Major Presentations," *Defense Journal* (June–July 1991), p. 41.
32 Hersh, "On the Nuclear Edge," pp. 56, 62–4, 66, 67, 57.
33 Ibid., p. 64.
34 Ibid., pp. 66–8, 57.
35 James Adams, "Pakistan 'Nuclear War Threat'," *Sunday Times*, May 27, 1990.
36 Hamish McDonald, "Destroyer of Worlds," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 30, 1992, p. 24.
37 Burrows and Windrem, pp. 61–2, 82.
38 Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee, eds., "Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis," Occasional Paper 17 (Washington, D.C.: The Stimson Center, 1994), pp. 21–2.
39 Interview; also see Hersh.
40 Gen. (ret.) V. N. Sharma, "It's All Bluff and Bluster," *Economic Times* (Bombay), May 18, 1993.
41 Hersh, p. 65.
42 Ibid., 65, 66; Krepon and Faruqee, "The 1990 Crisis," p. 18.
43 Interview.
44 Hersh, p. 65; Burrows and Windrem, p. 85.
45 For a critique of this interpretation, see the informed contribution by Captain Uday Bhaskar of the Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis, the Government of India's "think-tank," in two publications: "How Real was the N-Crisis of '90," *Times of India*, May 25, 1996, and the more nuanced "The May 1990 Nuclear 'Crisis': An Indian Perspective," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 20 (1997), pp. 317–32.
46 Gen. Sundarji stressed this point. See *India Today*, April 30, 1990.

7 Lessons for the real world

1 Shekhar Gupta, "Benazir Bhutto: Playing with Fire," *India Today*, May 31, 1990.
2 Devin Hagerty's chapter "Nuclear Weapons and the Kashmir Crisis," in *The Theory and Practice of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia*" (University of Pennsylvania, 1995).

3 See Ved Marwah, *Uncivil War: Pathology of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 1997), 367 Annexures. For instance, the death toll in terrorist violence was 31 (1988), 92 (1989), 1177(1990), 1393 (1991), 1909 (1992), 1323 (1993), and 217 (1994).

4 For an overview of the many India–Pakistan conflicts, see Sumit Ganguly, *Conflicts Unending* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), and for a study of the 2001–2 crisis, see Stephen Philip Cohen, "South Asia Amid Crisis," in Richard Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg, eds., *Strategic Asia, 2002–03* (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2002).

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